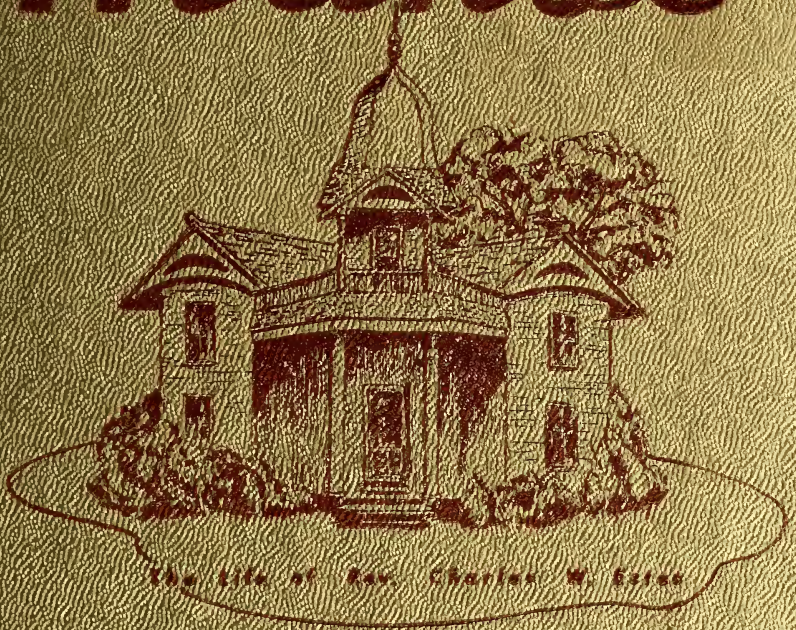
Manners of the Manse



The Life of Rev. Charles W. Estes

NANNIE MORRIS ESTES

LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

B
E795e

I.H.S.

MANNERS of the MANSE

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2012 with funding from
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

http://archive.org/details/mannersofmanse00este

Nannie Morris Estes as she looks today.

MANNERS of the MANSE

By
NANNIE MORRIS ESTES

The Naylor Company
Publishers of the Southwest
San Antonio, Texas

COPYRIGHT ©, 1959, BY NANNIE MORRIS ESTES

THIS BOOK OR PARTS THEREOF MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT PERMISSION EXCEPT FOR CUSTOMARY PRIVILEGES EXTENDED TO THE PRESS, OR OTHER REVIEWING AGENCIES.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOG CARD NUMBER 59-9049

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

B
E795

Dedicated to the loving memory of my husband,
the Reverend Charles William Estes,
who was a good man and a
wonderful Preacher.

75629

Contents

Introduction ix

Section of Photographs between pages 16 and 17

CHAPTER		PAGE
1.	Preparation for Living	1
2.	Preparation for Preaching	5
3.	Music Hath Its Charms	9
4.	Why Preachers Move to New Fields	13
5.	The First New Church Erected	17
6.	A Broader and Fairer Field	23
7.	Unfinished Building Needs Preacher's Help	27
8.	How Larger Congregations Are Formed	31
9.	Trek Over the Ozark Trail	39
10.	The Family Meets Texas	55
11.	The Move to the Show-Me State	59
12.	Texas-Bound in 1930	65
13.	West Texas Dust Storms	75
14.	Westward We Go	79
15.	Back to Farms with Greener Fields	83
16.	War Clouds	89
17.	Days of Readjustments	99

Ill. Hist. Survey

Introduction

"He is a good man and a wonderful Preacher" were the first descriptive words spoken *of* Charles William Estes by Rev. T. A. Williams, pastor at that time of the First Presbyterian Church in Grandview, Illinois, *to* the young organist, Miss Nannie Morris, who later married "that wonderful Preacher" by the name of Estes.

C. W. Estes was versatile in his interests and outreach; he identified himself actively with a variety of constructive community enterprises, and he commanded the respect, admiration and loyalty of people of all denominations and creeds. Evangelistic fervor characterized his preaching, and he was never happier than when engaged in revival meetings in the churches which he served.

This little story deals more with this Preacher, his life, his children and their home — always known as "The Manse," and how the seven children tried and are still trying to make their lives measure up to their "Preacher's" high standards.

— MRS. CHARLES W. ESTES,
better known as "Nannaw," "Mom" and
"Nannie." December 21, 1949

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

Henceforth, there is laid up for me, a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

II Timothy, 4:7 & 8

CHAPTER 1

Preparation for Living

SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO TODAY, this 21st of December, 1949, on the prairies of Hill County in Texas in the little community called Grandview, lived a humble farming couple, James Andrew and Mary Anna Barron Estes. The year was 1874, and to this couple was born their first child, a boy, christened Charles William Estes, and known in this book as "the Preacher."

His parents were devout Christians who established their home on Christian principles. Until the age of ten, this little boy's life was similar to any other "country" boy living in that sparsely settled country. Soon after, in 1885, his mother was called to her Heavenly Home, leaving her husband and three sons, Charles W., Arthur H., and Tom D., and one baby girl, Mary Eva.

Earlier, at about the age of six when the children were playing "Camp Meeting," Charles insisted, "Let me be the preacher." To quote his own statement, "Then something wonderful happened to me, and during all those years, this 'something' has always been very prominent in my Christian experience, developing until it ripened into a definite decision in response to the Divine Call of the Gospel Ministry. I cannot remember the time when I did not love the Lord, and I united with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church at

the Old Rock Church near Valley Mills, Texas, when I was fourteen years of age."

He attended public school as the opportunity afforded, and while attending high school worked at a variety of jobs including "packing water, selling turnip greens, cutting wood, hauling water, serving as janitor, and building fires at the schoolhouse and at the church, clerking and delivery boy and day-laborer in town, teaming, farm and ranch work." Much of this type of work was made necessary because of the location of the depot, which was over a mile distant on the rough wagon trail from the little town of Meridian where "Preacher" was then living.

At one time, he helped haul native stone from the quarry into town when the Bosque County Courthouse was built in Meridian. This building is still in use. During most of these early, struggling years, "Preacher" made his home with his relatives. Judge and Mrs. Jim Robinson, in Meridian. "Aunt Lou" Robinson made a real home for him, and "Uncle Jim" encouraged him to study and to think of more schooling. It was here that he took advantage of Judge Robinson's law library, where he studied law for about six months. He attended Summer Normal School and taught in the county for three years.

One of the favorite tales Preacher enjoyed telling of his teaching days was the story laid in the small country school, located near Whitney, Texas, — "down in the cedar brakes." Two of the pupils, a boy and a girl, arrived at school in very dirty clothing with their faces grimy and their hair uncombed. As the teacher (who was Preacher) introduced them to the washbasin, the bar of soap and the comb, these two children even at the end of the day were neater than when they first arrived in the morning. But early the following morning, the father of these two pupils came riding up to the schoolyard on a small mule and very loudly and belligerently informed the teacher that "he had sent his children to school to get larnin', not to be bathed and haircombed and parted!" But the teacher had been forewarned about the father, who seemed to enjoy being a bully in the

community, so when he went out to meet the man, Preacher was armed with the axe with which he chopped wood for the heater.

Needless to say, school continued with all the pupils in their places, with faces shining and with heads neatly combed.

Because of the trying financial conditions, and the very difficulty of trying to go to school, he said, "I resisted the Divine Call until I entered my twenty-first year. Then I gave up completely and went to my pastor, Rev. Walter E. Spoonts. I told him of my experience. To my surprise, Spoonts replied, 'I have been expecting this for some time.' He at once arranged for a special meeting of the Presbytery of Waco, at which session I was received as a candidate for the Gospel Ministry."

Charles W. Estes was received under the care of Waco Presbytery in August, 1895, and was licensed to preach in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church by the same Presbytery in December 1897, at McGregor, Texas.

He at once began an active life in Gospel singing and revival meetings, and in all other phases of church work. In the summer of 1898, he assisted in a number of revival meetings, which closed in August so that he could pick cotton with his brothers and sister. One month later, in response to a call from the Indian Territory, for young men to enter mission work, he, together with three other boys, volunteered for service. At the time of departure, however, the other young volunteers did not arrive, so he went along alone. He arrived early in October, 1898, at Davis in the Indian Territory (now Davis, Oklahoma) where he worked under the Home Mission Board of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

In this frontier, he entered upon new experiences, riding over unsettled country, preaching and singing the Gospel, visiting widely scattered homes, holding odd jobs and caring for the little Mission Church. But after a few months, he gave up the job as clerk for the Ledlow Lumber Company in Davis, where he was making $75 per month, to de-

vote his full time as pastor of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Davis at a salary of $25 a month.

In this little church the Preacher's career began in earnest; for it was here that he conducted his first funeral service. It was his duty also to preside for the first time at a marriage ceremony in this same church, in March, 1900. Unique was his experience, for — exactly forty-eight years later — in May, 1948, he was called to come back to Davis, Okla., to conduct the funeral service in this same little chapel for the lady, Mrs. Jim Kelly, who had been the young bride in the first wedding ceremony. Ironically, this funeral service for Mrs. Kelly proved to be the last time he presided at a funeral, anywhere — for the Preacher, too, passed away in 1948.

Tasks in this section of the Indian Territory were varied and dangerous, for Preacher had to cope with outlaws and half-breeds, in addition to trying to deal with the problems of the Indians. In one instance, after a United States marshal had been murdered by bandits in the spring of 1899, the Preacher, standing on a tree stump in the Davis Cemetery, quietly delivered a sincere message on law and order and good living, at the funeral for the officer. And following the service, Preacher and other citizens of the settlement patrolled the town, expecting a raid by the outlaws. On the following Sunday morning, Preacher conducted his regular morning worship service with a rifle leaning against the pulpit.

His former pastor, W. E. Spoonts, now of Washington, Indiana, invited him to come to Indiana to assist in some revival meetings. So, in September, 1900, he arrived in Washington, Indiana, to help with the music at the meetings. Then he remained in Indiana serving two smaller churches at Harrodsburg and Elletsville and continuing some college courses. By that time, he had a strong desire to complete the necessary training, and was ordained to the full work of the Ministry in June, 1901, in Washington, Indiana, by the Presbytery of Indiana.

CHAPTER 2

Preparation for Preaching

WHILE SERVING THE Cumberland Presbyterian Church at Harrodsburg, Indiana, Preacher met and married Miss Jessie Gayle Morgan, a young music teacher whose home was near there. Preacher's old friend, Rev. W. E. Spoonts, performed the marriage ceremony on July 2, 1902, in Spoonts' home, which was the manse at Washington.

In September, the young couple left Indiana for Lebanon, Tennessee, where they both were enrolled in Cumberland University. Preacher began his seminary training in earnest. And after having secured special permission to enroll in the Women's College at Lebanon, he also attended this school in order to study voice. He loved to sing, and it seemed he was always singing, everywhere for everyone, when there was not an opportunity to preach. His young wife also took music lessons during those years at Lebanon.

When vacation came, following his first year in seminary, Preacher and his wife went to Duluth, Minnesota, in 1903, to do special rescue work at the Bethel Mission in the slum section of the city. Here Preacher witnessed sin in all of its destructive forms, for he worked among drunkards and dope addicts, men and women alike, broken in spirit and in body. Later in his life, he told of the time he preached in

saloons, using the bar as a pulpit. Preacher and the other Mission workers were influential in helping a particular young girl, who was reared in a lovely home in another section of the city, regain her self-respect and her good health. The parents of this young lady were so happy when their daughter returned home, that, in order to express their heartfelt gratitude, they established a home on the outskirts of Duluth for homeless girls who needed assistance to start life anew.

The Mission workers witnessed the reformation of many people who had become regular outcasts in all walks of life. This work was very near to the heart, Preacher always said.

Instead of returning to the seminary in the fall of 1903, Preacher accepted a call to serve at Newburgh, Indiana, where he pastored the church in town and the Mt. Hebron Church, located about four miles from town, a long, difficult trip by horse and buggy on muddy roads. In Newburgh, one of the big problems for the Christian people was the constant feuding between the river people on the Indiana side of the Ohio River and the people on the Kentucky side. In one instance, Preacher accompanied the Newburgh "law" to the Kentucky side of the river when a Newburgh citizen, too drunk to know what he was doing, was in very serious trouble. In the scuffle near the gangplanks of the boat, the drunken man was knocked into the oozing mud and water. It was Preacher who jumped in after him, holding up his head out of the thick, sucking mud until a small boat could pick them up. This ruffian apparently reformed, and later became a friend of Preacher.

Leadership was again displayed when Preacher quieted a frightened crowd on an overloaded river boat when the members of his Sunday School went up the river by boat for a picnic. An emergency arose on the return trip when the passengers, believing the boat to be unsafe because it was overloaded, became panicky. It was Preacher Estes to whom the captain turned, to quiet the milling crowd, and the boat did return safely to Newburgh.

Many coal miners lived in and around Newburgh —

some living in very great poverty. Preacher worked among these people, trying to raise their standard of living and to influence them and their bosses to better Christian living.

Preacher's first son was born in October, 1903, and named Barron Morgan Estes. The following summer, the couple brought their baby son to Texas for a visit with the family and to attend some of the camp meetings near Meridian.

During the Christmas holidays in 1904, Preacher became ill of "grippe," and his fourteen-month-old son was also very ill. After a few days, the son's sickness was diagnosed as meningitis, and on January 14, 1905, the little one passed away. On the same day, Preacher's and Jessie Gayle's second child, Mary Eva, was born — only to live for a few hours. Friends of the young couple, frightened by the meningitis, all left the manse in haste, and the colored Mammy was alone to care for the needs of the bereaved family.

Weakened by his illness, Preacher had to get out of bed and attend the burial services of the two infants. The sorrow and loss of the two children were almost more than the young couple could face. But even then, Preacher had his faith and his Gospel.

Several months after this double tragedy, the couple returned to Lebanon, Tennessee, where Preacher enrolled for his senior year. He had been working on his second year's work in the summer and by correspondence. While in Lebanon, this last year, he served many small churches, and often said he had never missed a Sunday religious service of some kind during these years.

Music continued to play an important role in Preacher's life, for during this last year he sang with the Lebanon University Glee Club and the men's quartet, in addition to carrying the heavy scholastic load of his ministerial training. He was graduated from Lebanon Seminary in May, 1906, and accepted a call to the Presbyterian Church of Ft. Branch, Indiana. He was always sincerely and humbly a hard worker for Presbyterianism throughout his long years of service, advocating the values of union between the various branches of the denomination.

Another son, John Dillon Estes, was born at Ft. Branch, on December 8, 1906, but the young mother died a few months later, after a long illness. With all kinds of difficulties but always a brave heart, Preacher maintained his home for his son. An old and dear friend, Judge John F. Dillon of Jasper, Indiana, for whom this son was named, insisted that Preacher take a brief rest from his pastoral duties, and Judge Dillon furnished funds for Preacher to visit his relatives in Texas. Refreshed and rested, he returned to Ft. Branch to resume his pastoral work and his homemaking in the manse. Of course, he had some assistance from members of his congregation and from part-time housekeepers, but his own relatives were all so far away in Texas and Oklahoma that they were never able to visit or to help him maintain his home during these trying times.

CHAPTER 3

Music Hath Its Charms

DURING THE YEARS after graduating from seminary, Preacher liked to exchange pulpits with other ministers and to hold evangelistic meetings. This he did often in various localities in Indiana and Illinois. And so it happened that the pastor, Rev. T. A. Williams of the Grandview, Illinois, church, desired Preacher to help him in a revival meeting. In fact, he held two meetings in this little town; one in January, and the second in October, 1908.

Grandview was a small inland village, two and one-half miles from the railroad at Dudley, and boasted only two churches: the Methodist Episcopal and the Presbyterian. Each church had only half-time pastors, so it was customary that the same singers "did the music" for the regular services of both churches, and for all funerals or other public gatherings. Miss Nannie Eleanor Morris, organist of the Methodist church, also sang alto in the choir at the Presbyterian church, and felt very much at home in both churches. When time came for the Presbyterian meeting in October, their own organist was ill. So they asked the "M. E." organist to help them during the series of services. Miss Morris was teaching school in Dudley (she rode out to Dudley from her home in town with the mail carrier each morning, and some of her brothers, sisters or cousins, took her back to town

each evening). But the organist was glad to help the Presbyterians at this time. And when the visiting evangelist arrived, he met Miss Organist. And that is where the charm began.

As a "special" for each evening's service, Preacher was asked to sing some of the favorite hymns, and that meant hours of rehearsing — with the organist's assistance, of course. What better way to become acquainted? And rapidly? In fact, after a day or two, the supper invitations for the preachers included the M. E. organist, in order that the two would have more time in which "to practice." At the close of the meeting, Preacher returned to Indiana, and wrote many letters to the organist at Grandview. In fact, it has been said that this M. E. organist-schoolmarm closed her school thirty minutes early the day she received her first letter from him.

At Dudley, where Miss Morris was teaching, the mid-semester holiday came at the end of the fifth month, ending the session on February 5. So the wedding was planned for February 10 at eight o'clock in the evening in the Presbyterian church at Grandview. The pastor, Rev. T. A. Williams, officiated at the ceremony and was assisted by the Methodist minister, Rev. Campbell. Although the ceremony was "informal," with no attendants, the bride wore a traditional bridal gown made of white organdy trimmed with "all-over" lace, and she carried a small Bible, the Christmas gift she had received from the Preacher. Needless to say, the church was overflowing with guests from the community, and many Indiana visitors, including, of course, the elders of the church and their wives. A reception followed the wedding, and was held in the Morris home, two blocks from the church. The melted snow and mud had frozen over, making the roads too rough for a buggy or surrey, and the members of the wedding party walked to the church for the wedding.

Early the next morning, members of the family assisted the Preacher and his wife in packing the lovely gifts which carried the good wishes of their friends and relatives. For

all their "goods" had to be shipped to Fort Branch, Indiana, a distance of 130 miles — a very long journey at that time.

Two couples accompanied the bride and groom on their train journey to Indiana. Mr. and Mrs. George Beloat of Fort Branch (he was an elder in Preacher's church) and Mr. and Mrs. I. B. Clapp of Grandview (she was the bride's cousin and "just had to see" what the church at Fort Branch looked like!) accompanied them to Dudley, where they took the train for Terre Haute, Indiana, changing trains here for Fort Branch.

Members of the Christian Endeavor group of Preacher's own church met the wedding party when the train arrived, and threw plenty of rice. Later in the evening, the couple and the church officers and their wives were honored with a turkey dinner in the home of one of the church members. Then the couple went to the manse where the bride met the two-year-old son for the first time.

CHAPTER 4

Why Preachers Move to New Fields

TO BE SURE, the bride of this preacher went to her new home with some misgivings of how she would be welcomed by the congregation. But good people always have good thoughts and good actions for all occasions. So this, her first congregation, was very cordial and helpful in all ways. And she welcomed their help, for she not only had to learn to be a wife — she had to learn to be a preacher's wife.

She had some knowledge of the duties of the Mistress of the Manse, for her father's only brother, W. L. Morris, was a minister, serving the Methodist congregation in eastern Kansas for many years.

In May, 1909, Preacher was elected a Commissioner to the General Assembly which convened in Denver, Colorado. The Preacher's bride of three months and the little boy stayed at the manse while he was gone two weeks. At the Denver meeting, Preacher met a Synodical Secretary from Illinois who had a vacant church where a new building was needed. The man from Illinois felt Preacher was "the"

man to suit that vacant field, and was sure Preacher was capable of the great undertaking of building a new church. So the Preacher returned home from the Assembly, with thoughts of changing fields. Of course, this move would be to a larger congregation in a larger city, with, incidentally, an increased salary.

The Preacher's wife at first disliked the idea of a move so soon, since the Fort Branch congregation had been her first "church family," and this had been her very first manse. She felt already that a congregation, in a way, takes the place of one's own family, left behind. Even if one is not a missionary in a faraway place on the other side of the globe, there is, or should be, a kindred tie binding the preacher's wife and the congregation, enabling her to be of more help to him in many and varied ways.

But there are various reasons — a few excuses — for a move. If one could read some of the letters written to the Committee of Vacancy and Supply in a Presbytery, one would note and more readily understand the reasons a pastor's family might have for desiring to move to fairer and, of course, more prosperous fields. Excerpts of such letters might be something like this: "We need better schools for our children"; "My wife needs a change of climate, recommended by the doctor"; or, "Just for the good of the congregation." But certainly, the true minister makes this final decision when he feels the call to move onward to labor where God has real need of his work. Of course the preacher's family always go along, planning to like their new home and to make a host of new and good friends, regardless of the wonderful people they leave behind in the congregation.

During this summer of indecision, or rather, in June, 1909, the Preacher took his wife and son to Jasper, Indiana, to visit in the home of Judge John F. Dillon and his mother-in-law, Mrs. Margaret Sherritt. These true friends lived eight miles out in the country from Jasper on a 600-acre tract of land which had been homesteaded by Mrs. Sherritt's father when the country was first opened to set-

tlers. Beautifully wooded areas of as much as 100 acres to a patch covered portions of this estate where the young Preacher and his family had their wonderful vacation.

During the visit, friends enjoyed a day at the famous French Lick Springs, a beautiful resort in Southern Indiana, a wonderful section of this great state.

Other summer visits included brief "during-the-week" visits in Newburgh and in Mount Hebron, former charges of the Preacher. Of course, at such times, Preacher's wife sort of felt as if she were on exhibition — she was introduced so many times to so many different groups of friends of her husband.

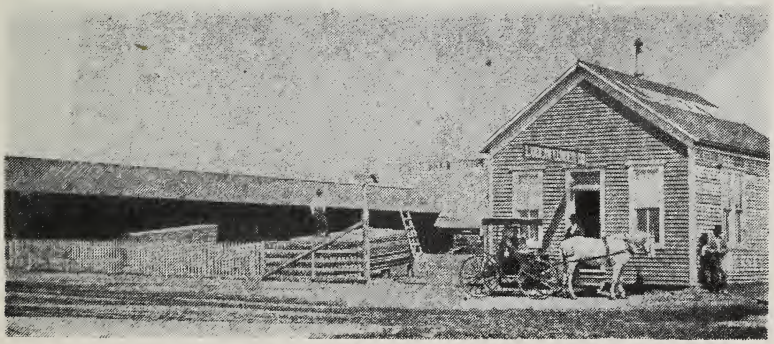
In July, they were called to Kansas, Illinois, by the death of Grandmother Morris. This favorite grandparent, together with her husband known as C. L. and Jane Seymour Morris, had just celebrated their sixty-fourth wedding anniversary the previous April 8, 1909 — a remarkable anniversary, which all the relatives had celebrated together.

Then in the following August, Preacher announced he had definitely decided to move to Newton, Illinois. Among the farewell gifts to the young preacher and his family was "Medley," a dark bay horse, the faithful buggy horse which had served elderly friends, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Ewing (who could no longer "get about" much). Preacher bought a phaeton which was shipped with the horse and the household goods to the new home in August of 1909.

Section of Photographs

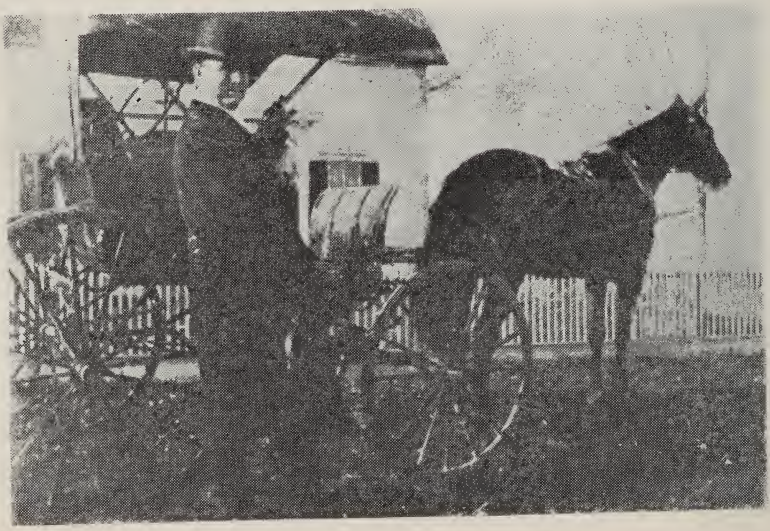
The Livery Stable with the "Meridian Transfer" in front, with Charles W. Estes, the young boy, driving. Meridian, Texas, about 1892.

Davis, in the Indian Territory, was the home of the Laidlow Lumber Company, where young "Charlie" Estes turned down a job paying $75.00 per month, to take a Mission church, at the salary of $25.00 per month.



When Preacher went a-courtin', in the early days.

This is the manner in which Rev. Estes did his pastoral calling in the early days.

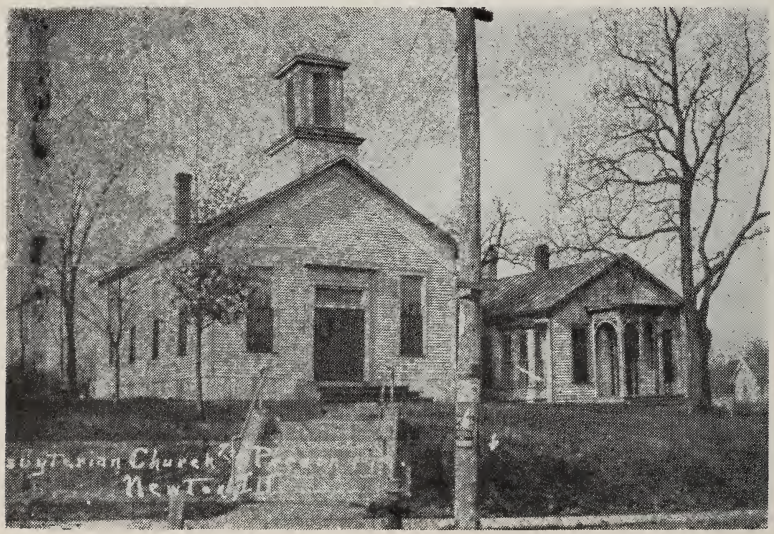


Fort Branch, Indiana, Presbyterian manse, Feb. 20, 1909, with the young minister, Estes, his wife, and his first son, John Dillon.

Presbyterian Church, USA, Grandview, Illinois, where Rev. Charles W. Estes and the organist, Miss Nannie Eleanor Morris, were united in marriage, Feb. 10, 1909.

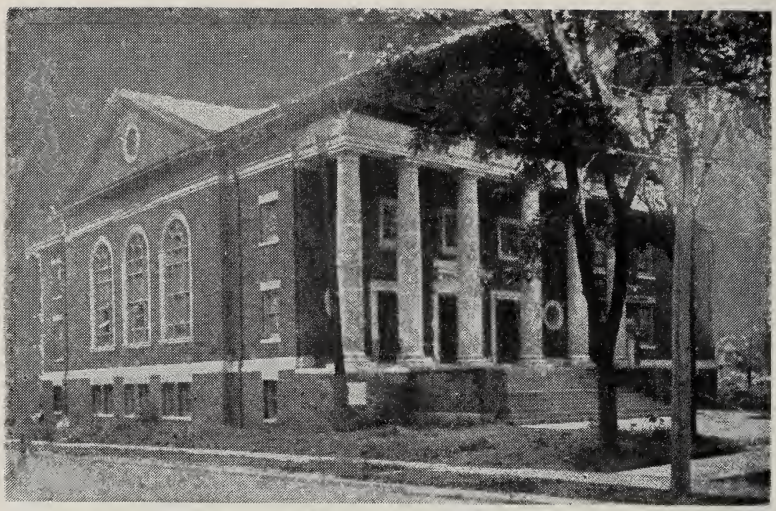
The first church building erected under Rev. Estes' pastorate was this one at Newton, Illinois, Nov. 11, 1911.

The church and manse at Newton, Ill., birthplace of the two older girls, Lillian and Margaret Eleanor.



The First Presbyterian Church, Neoga, Illinois.

On May 1, 1913, Charles Morris Estes was born to the Preacher's family in this manse at Neoga, Illinois.

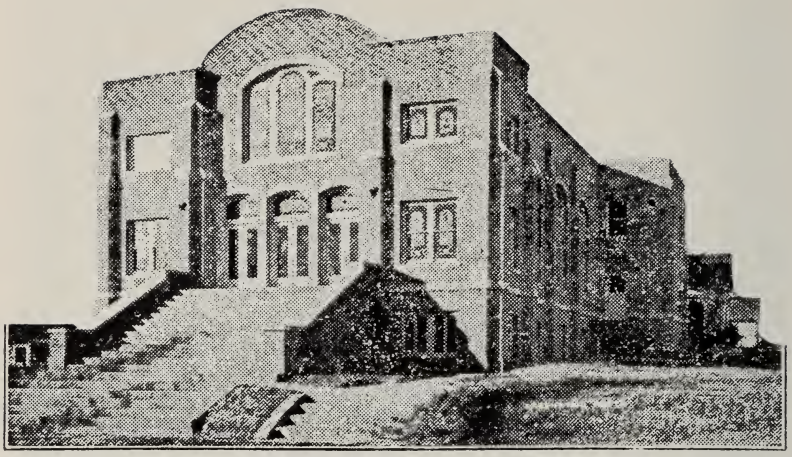


This new building was dedicated in September, 1914, at Taylorville, Illinois. There being no manse here, the minister and his family had to rent a house.

The First Presbyterian Church, Ashmore, Illinois, built under the leadership of Rev. Estes. Just behind it can be seen the large new manse, birthplace of the fourth daughter, Ruth.

The First Presbyterian Church, Hobart, Oklahoma, October, 1918.

October, 1923, was the date of this picture of the "new" manse in Hobart, Oklahoma, with the three little girls who later were ill so long of typhoid fever.

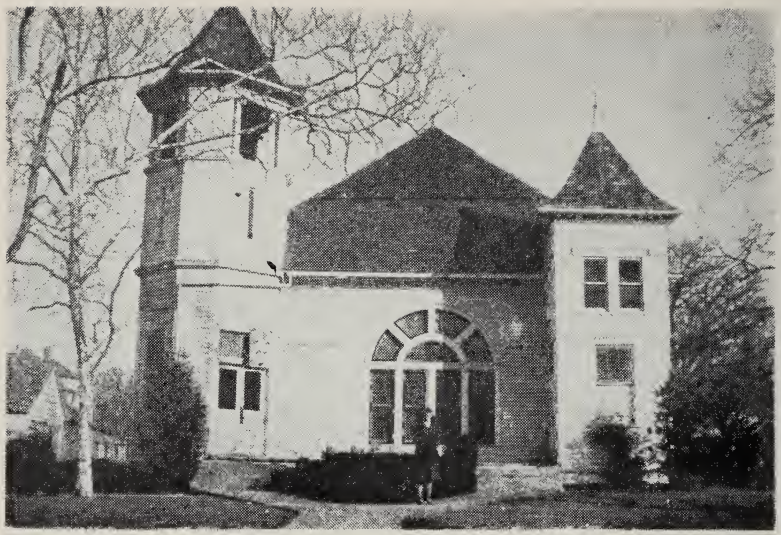


The new building at McKinney, Texas, with the manse just showing at the far right.

Nine inmates of the Oklahoma State Reformatory, Granite, Oklahoma, were baptized by emersion with Rev. Estes officiating, as shown in picture, 1924.

The "big" Manse at Denton which was overrun with high school and college youths during the Estes' stay in Denton, Texas. Sept., 1930.

The five "Preacher's Daughters" in front of the church at Winters, Texas, on March 1, 1938, wedding day of Ruth. From left to right: Lola May, Ruth, Anna Lou, Eleanor and Lillian.



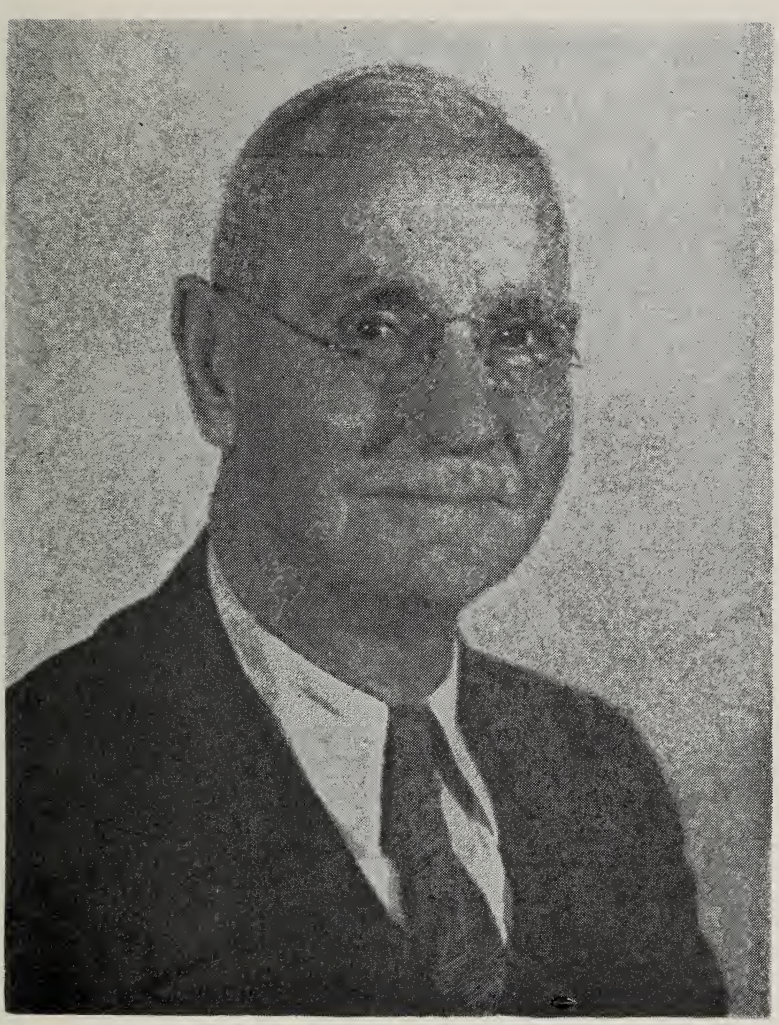
First Presbyterian Church, Whitesboro, Texas, Sept., 1938.

The Estes' Christmas Dinner, 1939, with the first grandchild, Margaret Ann McCullough, who was celebrating her fourth birthday, at the far end of the table with "Nannaw."

Rev. Charles W. Estes, John Prather and Mrs. Prather of Ashmore, Ill., and Mrs. Estes, in front of the Whitesboro Manse, Jan. 16, 1948.

The manse at Whitesboro, Texas, where Preacher and Nannie were living when he died in 1948.

Nannie, in 1947, in Whitesboro, Texas.



Preacher as he nearly always looked: smiling. The photo above was taken in 1947.

CHAPTER 5

The First New Church Erected

THE NEW FIELD, Newton, boasted a small frame church building, badly in need of repair. Alongside of the church was the manse, seeming to be tucked under the windows of the church – and also in need of hammer and paint. The two buildings topped a hill, and were a dozen or so steps above the sidewalk and street level. This manse had been occupied by the former pastor, an elderly man, for many months without much congregational visiting. Of course, it needed many improvements to make it barely livable.

At the first look at this tiny house, the Preacher's wife began to cry, saying, "I'm so homesick!" But after their furniture, wedding gifts and the piano were arranged, the pictures and curtains up, some flowers arranged on the library table, the little house assumed a new air of charm and hospitality; and soon became truly "home, sweet home."

With less than three dozen members (mostly women), the congregation planned a reawakening in the little town, which was the county seat of Jasper County. Plans were started immediately for the construction of a new building. The County School Superintendent offered to volunteer his services as an architect, and after two years of prayer, hard

work and some worry, the keys of the new building were turned over to the trustees of the congregation on Sunday, November 19, 1911. An eloquent speaker, Rev. C. E. Schiable of Burlingame, Kansas, delivered the dedicatory address, and on this occasion over $5,000 was pledged to defray most of the indebtedness against the new building.

The Newton Monitor for Wednesday, November 22, 1911, reported: "Much credit must be given the pastor, Rev. Charles W. Estes, who first proposed the erection of a modern church . . . and who, since the first shovel of dirt was thrown, has been constantly 'on the job.' His optimistic view of conditions encouraged the membership, and if any became blue and despondent, a short conference with the pastor would at once shorten the length of the discouraged one's face."

The modern brick building was made more beautiful with well designed art-glass memorial windows. One, in particular, was installed in the pastor's study, recognizing a gift from the Mount Moriah Presbyterian church near Ft. Branch, Indiana, a former charge of Rev. Estes. How proud the congregation and the town of Newton were of this accomplishment! And the little group held the good will and friendship of all the city.

But back to the manse: Soon after getting settled in the new home, the Preacher was asked to perform a wedding ceremony, his first at Newton. The young bridal couple knocked at the door of the manse just before the supper hour, and a brief delay was necessary while Preacher donned a clean white shirt, tie and coat. The little son, nearly three years of age, was sent in the living room to entertain the prospective bride and groom. Trying to cover his excitement and to appear calm (and probably to show off a little), the groom began a conversation with little John Dillon, saying, "Well, son, I understand you are the only chick on this hill." The little boy replied, "No, Papa has six red chickens in the back yard," a reply which stopped any further overtures to conversation.

The Preacher's wife, always particularly interested when

informed of a coming wedding ceremony in the manse, always tried to find some flowers, and some of the time, to plan some light refreshments. Preacher's wife was truly and sincerely interested, and the welcome was cordial when a wedding couple came their way. For, you see, any wedding fees became her very own money to spend as she saw fit. However, such a sum usually went into the family purse for everyday needs, or was used for special gifts for the children.

When the family was living in Newton, Illinois, two baby daughters discovered America in the manse. The older one arrived on the eve of Easter, March 26, 1910, and was named Lillian (partly in recognition of the lovely Easter lilies), and the second little girl, Margaret Eleanor, came along in January, the 13th, 1912.

The young family visited relatives in Grandview during the summer of '10, and it was there that little Lillian was christened in the same church in which her parents had been married and by the same officiating pastor, Rev. T. A. Williams.

While living in Newton, Preacher took the work of the Blue Lodge in Masonry. An elder in Preacher's first congregation in Elletsville, Indiana, Captain Faulkner, who ranked high in Masonic circles (and who loved Preacher dearly and called him "his own boy") had promised to go anywhere to take part in this initiation whenever it might take place. So it was that Captain and Mrs. Faulkner journeyed to Newton to assist in conferring the Third Degree on the Preacher. This incident particularly impressed local people, for both Captain and Mrs. Faulkner were over seventy years of age, and their journey had been a long one.

The week immediately following the dedication of the new building in Newton was marked with a series of special evangelistic services. Preacher was assisted in these meetings by Rev. Walter Edward Spoonts, the "Cowboy, Lecturer, Preacher-Evangelist" of Jacksonville, Illinois. Since Spoonts was the oldest friend Preacher had "in the North," and since both were former Texans, Spoonts made his stopping place at the manse. Both gentlemen were fond of black-eyed peas

(an almost unknown vegetable in that part of the country), and Preacher's wife had never seen and certainly had never prepared any of this type of vegetable. Some Texas friends had sent some dried black-eyed peas to the family in the manse, so the Mrs. decided to serve them in honor of Rev. Spoonts' visit. She put them in a large stewer, covered them with water and placed the container on the stove. About every fifteen minutes or so, as the water over the peas would darken, she would drain the peas and add more clear water. But still the liquid turned very dark, and yes, the dark spots remained on the peas! Eventually she poured all the flavor, and food value, too, down the drain, and the black-eyed pea dish was a failure. But Mrs. Preacher soon learned how to prepare them the right way, and today is as fond of black-eyed peas as any Texan who insists on eating black-eyed peas each New Year's Day for good luck in the year to come.

At Newton, the church organist was Mrs. Arnold, mother of Gene Arnold, who even then was winning renown as a singer, and later became a popular radio artist. Many years later, in honor of the Presbyterian church (where he served as guest soloist on many occasions) Gene wrote the song, "The Little Church on the Hill." Preacher corresponded with Gene at this time and was given a copy of the number.

Newton had also been the home of the late Honorable Hale Johnston, whose family lived there during the Preacher's pastorate. Hon. Johnston headed the National Prohibition ticket for president of the United States in the 'eighties. One of the Johnston girls, Mrs. Will Evers of Denton, Texas, with her baby daughter, Lottie, spent the summer of 1912 in Newton visiting the family. Of course, the Preacher's family met the Texas guest and visited together many times.

Years later, in 1930, when Preacher and his family moved to Denton, Texas, this friendship was renewed, and younger daughters of the two families, Jessie Evers and Ruth Estes, (who was Preacher's fourth daughter) became the best of friends and attended school together.

Typical of Preacher's experiences was the "Billy Trainer

story" which took place at Newton: Billy Trainer was the husband of a member of Preacher's congregation, who had become a victim of the drinking habit. He had a certain position in the community, serving the county as county clerk, but he persisted in his bad habits. One Sunday, just as Preacher and his family were sitting down to dinner, a note came for Preacher from "Miss Emma," the aristocratic sister of Billy. Miss Emma feared that her brother had overdone the thing this time and would not live through this "sick spell." Apparently, Trainer had been in his room at home for three days suffering the "d.t.'s."

The good Dr. Burton, a mutual friend of the Trainer family and of Preacher also, sent for the Preacher, and the two men worked together all through the long afternoon on up until time for Christian Endeavor services at the church. As the sick man improved, he promised the doctor and the Preacher that he would give up drinking, this time "for good."

Billy Trainer was completely sober and signed a pledge which had been made out by the Preacher and witnessed by the doctor and the Preacher. Preacher returned home just in time to clean up a bit for his evening service, and Billy Trainer became a devout and loyal church member and worker, and also, a dearer friend of Preacher's.

In 1933, Preacher and wife returned to Newton to attend the first homecoming and anniversary of the dedication of the "new" church building. Upon arriving at their former home, Preacher and his wife found no one but Billy Trainer serving the Newton congregation as Senior Elder. Preacher and wife also returned to Newton in 1940 to attend the seventh Homecoming Service of that church.

The church building erected at Newton was Preacher's first monument, that is, built under his direction, to the Living Church, and therefore, has always held a very special spot in the hearts of the Estes family.

CHAPTER 6

A Broader and Fairer Field

IN SEPTEMBER, 1912, Preacher received a call inviting him to spend a Sunday in the Neoga, Illinois, church as a candidate to become its pastor. This field seemed very promising: a large modern church building, well equipped, and a large comfortable manse — fairly new! Just prior to receiving this call, Preacher had suffered a very severe illness — one which couldn't quite be explained or diagnosed. Just as the doctor had made up his mind to move Preacher to Effingham to a hospital, the patient began to improve. However, he was so ill for three or four days that members of his family and congregation were quite concerned. He became worse on a Saturday night, and was so seriously ill the next day that the doctor thought he might not recover. During the whole afternoon, his elders and other friends held prayer service in the church, and at the close of the service, Preacher did respond to the treatment; and by nightfall, seemed out of danger. The hand of the Lord!

But there was a humorous side to this harrowing experience, for one of the members of the church, a wealthy widow and a "good dresser," did not learn of Preacher's improvement that Sunday evening (she was not present at the prayer service), so when she came to call early Monday morning and found him so much better, all she could do

was to chide the Preacher and his wife for not letting her know Sunday of the good news, and exclaim, "You should have sent me word, I spent most of the night praying for you, and you were already better!"

Anyway, following the strenuous building campaign and the illness, Preacher was advised to get some rest (if such a thing be possible for a devout preacher). So to him, for many reasons, the invitation to come to Neoga was a pleasing one. After prayerfully considering the move, the Preacher did feel it was the thing for him to do. So, by the middle of October, the family found its home in the manse at Neoga.

The oldest child was enrolled in elementary school, and the work began as it usually does in a new field — with great interest. In the church was a group of music-minded individuals who were also earnest Christians, and an exceptional choir was organized. The Young People's work became very forceful and developed with speed. And here, the Preacher's wife became a member of the Sewing Club, which met once a month. This was her first experience in being affiliated with "just a sociable group" that was not even connected with the church.

One of the young men of the congregation, Roscoe Coen, had given his life to be used of God on a foreign field. Roscoe was attending school at Milligan University at Decatur, preparing for his service to the church. The Neoga pianist for Sunday School and for the Young People's services, was Miss Mary Buchanan, who was engaged to be married to young Mr. Coen. This grand couple was married at Neoga by Preacher in 1918, and left that fall for Seoul, Korea. From that time on, the ties between this church, the congregation, the members and pastor, and all of Neoga, for that matter, and Korea, were very much strengthened as the years passed. Years later, the Coens found time to visit the Preacher and his family during each of their furloughs from the foreign field. Then, much later, in 1940 and in 1941, when Coen was forced to leave Korea, he assisted Preacher in meetings in Texas.

May Day, 1913, was marked with the arrival of a boy in the Estes home: Charles Morris was his name, and his coming made a total of two sons and two daughters in the manse. This occasion was celebrated by the full membership of the Neoga church, which was playing host at that time to the District Christian Endeavor Convention. And what a celebration!

The following July, Preacher attended the Ministers' Bible Conference at Winona Lake, Indiana. It was here that Preacher sang in the choir of over 300 voices directed by Professor E. O. Excell. In speaking of this wonderful experience, Preacher often said it was one place "where I could sing tenor as loud as I pleased." Such conferences and gatherings lend greatly toward making ministers more zealous in the work of their calling. One of the noted preachers at this conference was Dr. G. Campbell Morgan of London, England, and it was from him that Preacher received much renewed religious enthusiasm.

The family of the manse spent a real vacation in August of 1913, when they visited in Charleston, Illinois, for two weeks, camping out in the Coles County Fair Grounds. The chautauqua was being held nearby during this vacation time (which was referred to as an "outing"), and one of the notable speakers on the program was the Honorable William Jennings Bryan. Preacher served on the welcoming committee at Charleston, and it was his privilege to greet and entertain the Hon. Mr. Bryan, and also to accompany him in the ride to the fair grounds at the head of a parade. This association with Mr. Bryan and the vacation were events talked of with great pride by Preacher and by members of his family for many years.

The Neoga Presbyterian church was growing; members were added every Communion Sunday, and it was a splendid and thriving field. At one of the revival meetings, a young couple, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Garvin, from the Moody Bible Institute, came to Neoga to assist with the music. During the last of the series of meetings, Mr. Garvin, himself a marvelous Gospel singer, joined the Presbyterian church and was

taken under the care of Mattoon Presbytery and began serving the Church at Grandview, the former home of Mrs. Preacher. In a year or two, Garvin went to Cincinnati, where he entered the Lane Seminary and at the same time served a smaller church in the community of Seven Mile, Ohio. Within three years he completed the required work at Lane and became an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church, USA. Later, he returned to Neoga as pastor to the congregation in the very church in which he had been consecrated.

CHAPTER 7

Unfinished Building Needs Preacher's Help

AT TAYLORVILLE, Illinois, the pastor had become ill just when his congregation was in the middle of a building project. For this reason, the pastor resigned and retired; and so it was that the members of the Taylorville congregation extended an invitation to "Preacher" Estes asking him to speak for them, hoping they could persuade Preacher to leave Neoga and come to their aid. A visit was arranged, and Preacher came to visit Taylorville, where he found an old friend serving as an elder. The two had worked together previously in the church at Newton. This family, particularly, was anxious that Preacher accept the work at Taylorville, for they knew of Estes' experiences in church building programs.

The result of the visit? Naturally, Preacher decided he should attempt the project, after prayerful consideration. So just before Christmas, Preacher and family left Neoga for Taylorville where there was no manse.

It was in Taylorville that Preacher had his first experience of renting a house. Before many months, the church leased a more comfortable and larger house across the street

from the new church building. Once more, Preacher and the Estes' found themselves happily situated in a Presbyterian manse. In the attic of this house, the Estes family found a large extension dining table of solid quarter-sawed "golden" oak, complete with a set of ten leaves. Fully extended, the table held covers for twenty to twenty-four, depending on how many were little ones. The table was polished and given a place of honor in the dining room. Preacher's family began having all meals, including breakfast, every day at this table. The table was also the center for family worship; for every morning, when all the family was seated, Preacher read verses — sometimes a whole chapter — from the Bible, and followed it with prayer. This practice was never neglected, even in the later years when the children were hurrying to early morning classes in college.

Dining and devotions were not the only activities Preacher's family started around the massive oak table. Many arithmetic problems, many spelling lists, numbers of algebraic equations, and reams of paper used for themes and short stories, covered the big table throughout the years, as the seven children in the Preacher's family prepared school assignments on this dining table.

If the big oak table could talk, there would be hilarious accounts of tall tales, practical jokes, funny stories as well as pathetic accounts of sorrow and tragedy and sparkling conversation. For hospitality at the Preacher's house nearly always included a meal with everyone seated at the same time. Friends of the children were always warmly welcomed along with visiting ministers, missionaries, evangelists, some famous artists, speakers and other near-great men and women. And always, guests remarked at the length and breadth of the massive dining table, as well as the deliciously prepared and informally served meals. The table had been in continuous use for dining by some of the family since it was found that winter in 1913.

In April, 1914, the Ministers' Association of Taylorville led the dry forces in a campaign to vote out the saloons of the town. Mass meetings, prayer meetings and committee meet-

ings were planned and held. Volunteer workers assisted in transporting "dry" voters to the polls on election day. No man worked any harder than Preacher, who was driving a matched team of cream-colored horses (a team used by a local undertaker when the new hearse was in use). With this beautiful team hitched to an old-style cab, Preacher sat proudly erect in the driver's seat disregarding the pouring rain. To be sure: the dry votes carried that rainy day!

An interesting experience of Preacher's during this time was the role he played during the year of 1914 when, as a representative of Springfield Presbytery, he received into the membership of the Presbyterian Church, USA, an active church congregation complete with members, their building and a sum of money and other property, valued at about one million dollars, in all. This group had been formerly associated with the Dutch Reformed Church, but the members of the congregation felt they were more or less isolated from any sister churches of their own faith. They unanimously expressed their desire to become a part of the Presbyterian family, and Preacher officiated on behalf of the Presbytery of Springfield. This group of people happily and thankfully continued in their program of worship and study in their same buildings, and the merger was deemed successful.

Four cases of measles at one time can be a bit of a trial! But not so for Mrs. Preacher, when the four children of the manse all had measles in March, 1914. This was the initial experience of many such cases of multiple illnesses in the manse.

Late in the summer of 1914, among the guests in Preacher's home were the Rev. T. A. and Mrs. Williams, the Grandview pastor and wife — old and dear friends of the Estes'. After prayer meeting one Wednesday night, the Rev. Williams officiated in a christening service for the youngest baby, Charles Morris. This was another highlight in the family life at the manse.

Hewetsville, Illinois, was a small mining community near Taylorville. Each Sunday afternoon Preacher made the short trip to serve in a Presbyterian Mission which welcomed numbers of coal miners and their families. He directed Sunday

School classes and morning worship services every Sunday. On nearly all occasions of these visits, Preacher would meet people speaking as many as eight different tongues — but all worshipping together. Serving as an interpreter, and also as superintendent of the Sunday School, was the wife of the owner of the coal mines. Hers was a wonderful Christian work at this mission, and she was dearly loved by the numbers who attended, for she always taught them to say a "golden text" in their own tongue.

It was in this small mining community where working conditions were deplorable that Preacher's wife saw, in a measure, "how the other half of the world lives." Opportunities to serve these humble, less fortunate "strangers in America" were at every hand. The Preacher and his wife grew to respect and to cherish these friends.

The new church building, in town, at Taylorville, was completed and dedicated in July, 1914, and this large congregation was a successful example of the merger between churches in the Presbyterian, USA, and the Cumberland Presbyterian branches. A Dr. Darby, pastor of the church at Evansville, Indiana (Darby had earlier been an elder in the Presbyterian Church at Newburgh, Indiana, when Preacher served there in 1903-04), was invited to deliver the sermon of dedication for the new building. Dr. Darby was a long and tireless worker during those years for the union of the Cumberland Presbyterian branch with the "Mother Church" of Presbyterianism.

CHAPTER 8

How Larger Congregations Are Formed

WITH THE COMPLETION AND SUCCESS of the Taylorville building project, Preacher was winning some renown as a church builder, also as a leader who was a man of strong convictions and of great courage. Already in his chosen work, he was known for his optimistic approach to any problem in the face of all circumstances, and also for his enduring faith in people and in good projects. He was always conscious, however, of the Divine Call, and thus, his faith strengthened as his service broadened.

Preacher planned his work, with the Lord's help, always trying to hunt out those who might be left out — those who might need the help of Christian people; his goal was to further the Kingdom of God by adding Christians, as well as church members.

In Ashmore, Illinois, located also in Mattoon Presbytery, were two small church groups: one, a Cumberland Presbyterian congregation, and the other, a Presbyterian, USA. Each church was served by a half-time minister. Both congregations owned buildings which were very old and in rather bad repair. The Cumberland Presbyterian group was the

owner of a manse in Ashmore. These two groups had met on occasions, and were contemplating a union.

After much correspondence and some investigations, the two groups jointly asked Preacher to visit them. The result of that visit, you may well have guessed, for apparently it was love at first sight, as far as the people of Ashmore and the Preacher's family were concerned.

The formal call from the Ashmore group was accepted in October, 1914, and again the Preacher's family moved into a new community to make their home in the manse, a small frame house next door to the two-story brick building which had been erected in the 'sixties by the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. The town of Ashmore was not entirely new to the Preacher and his wife, for her family, the Morrises, still lived in and around Grandview, only fifteen miles to the east.

The United congregation used both buildings, which were maintained by separate boards of trustees until the union was perfected. At this time, all officers resigned, and new ones were duly elected to serve the united organization. Keeping everyone happy in regard to the union was the big problem, so a plan was formed under which the morning services were held in the "north" building, as it was called because of its location in the city of Ashmore, while evening services were held at the building in the southern part of town. The real reason for this solution was that the "south" building was the only one wired for electric lights.

Constructive Christian work, the type needed almost everywhere and at Ashmore, takes prayer, time, patience, energy and planning. Detailed arrangements for carrying on the business of building had to be made before any monies could be received. In short, a strong, old-fashioned Christianity was necessary to strengthen the faith of the members and to convert new souls. In due time, all the old properties were sold, and a new location was purchased in the central part of town. The new church was a beautiful red brick building with white marble trim, and columns at the front. Included was a two-story educational department at the rear. Then a lovely

two-story manse was erected just across the alley from the church. And the Preacher and his family moved into their new home, the manse.

The prayers had been answered, and the work had brought results. For now there was a wonderful united congregation, with members all working together for the Kingdom of God.

In May, 1915, the third daughter of the manse, Anna Lou, made her appearance in the family which totaled three girls and two boys at this time, sometimes filling even the larger new home to overflowing. The children all grew strong and active as they developed. The grove of beautiful walnut and maple trees in the yard contributed much to the pleasure and hours of play for these youngsters.

Preacher had been so busy with his congregations and his building programs, he had not returned to Oklahoma very often to visit his father and family. So in July, 1915, he, together with the three older children, John Dillon, Lillian and Eleanor, made a trip south to visit the relatives, and of course, to hold a revival meeting. En route from St. Louis to Oklahoma City, the Preacher's family spent a night on the train, and early the next morning the children had to be dressed, washed, brushed and combed. The two girls were wearing their hair in two long tight braids, each tied with large ribbon bows. So, displaying his usual initiative, Preacher fastened the braids, with safety pins (which method served very well until the girls met their grandmother Estes, who took over the hair ribbons).

About Thanksgiving of that same year, Preacher purchased his first automobile — a Maxwell, vintage 1915. How the family did enjoy the car! And also, the members of his congregation. Now Preacher could more easily serve his charge, and the entire family could enjoy visiting relatives and friends even at a distance.

During their residence at Ashmore, the children all had chicken pox, and this was followed with a siege of mumps. However, everyone seemed to manage these so-called "children's diseases" with no complications. The patience of even

a preacher and his wife can be tried when five children go through the long weeks of mumps and chicken pox!

During the months of the quarantines, Preacher and other church leaders were busy integrating the two branches of the Presbyterian faith on their local level, and foremost in their minds was the building program. Plans for the new church were progressing smoothly, and the congregation was surely growing rapidly.

Preacher was again elected a Commissioner to the General Assembly in May, 1917, when the largest governing body of the Presbyterian Church would convene in Dallas, Texas. To be chosen as delegate was a signal honor, and Preacher headed for Texas full of pride in his church and love of the church's leader. During his stay in Dallas, Preacher enjoyed the hospitality of the John M. McCoy home. Colonel McCoy was a distant relative of Preacher's wife, and the colonel was a leader and an elder in the City Temple Presbyterian Church of Dallas. A devout Christian, intensely interested in spreading the word of God, Col. McCoy, at seventy-five years of age, was confined to his wheel chair, for he had suffered amputation of both legs. Preacher often recalled how Col. McCoy refused to keep his handicap from preventing his church activities, and this dedicated Christian was a great source of inspiration to Preacher.

As he returned to Illinois, Preacher had earlier planned to visit an uncle, the Rev. W. L. Morris, in Dodge City, Kansas, but his plans were changed when he received news that a damaging cyclone had struck in Coles County, Illinois. So he hurried directly home, to Ashmore, Illinois, where he found the church, the manse and the family safe and sound.

The next big event was the wedding ceremony Preacher performed, uniting his young brother-in-law, Allyn Morris, and Miss Zilphia Zink, both of Kansas, Illinois, in marriage. This was the second such ceremony performed by Preacher for his wife's brothers. For, earlier while the Estes family lived in Taylorville, Preacher had officiated at the

wedding of another brother-in-law, Myron Morris, and Miss Ethel Black of Paris, Illinois.

Moving day came in June, 1917. Preacher moved the family and furniture — including the golden oak dining table — into the beautiful new two-story manse, that was complete with basement. A glorious house for a home with children.

An outstanding social event of the early summer was another wedding in the manse. A sister of Preacher's wife, Miss Lola Morris, and Mr. Sherman Pinnell of Kansas, Illinois, were married in the "new" manse. Another family wedding followed in September of that same year; Miss Marjorie Morris, Mrs. Preacher's youngest sister, was married to Mr. Merritt Bennett, also of Kansas. But this ceremony was held in the Morris home at Grandview. Preacher's mother-in-law, Mrs. J. S. Morris, could now say that her favorite Preacher Estes had married all her children!

Upon completion of the new church building in Ashmore, the memorable dedication services were planned and held October 28, 1917. Once again, Preacher called for his former pastor, Rev. W. E. Spoonts, to help in this service, which was one of the high points in Preacher's ministry. The day was a great one in the life of this Ashmore congregation. So much had been added to the physical plant of the church, but perhaps the greatest advancement had been made spiritually, for all concerned felt as if they had reached a "mountain-top" of blessings.

On October 31, 1917, the fourth daughter, Ruth, was born — just two days after the dedication of the new building! This growing family was certainly filling the "new" manse.

During the Christmas holiday that winter, an epidemic of whooping cough began "making the rounds" in Preacher's family, and all the children together with the mother became patients. So all of January and February were busy weeks; anyway, they certainly had a "whooping big time!"

To make things worse, a coal famine was staged. Our country suffered from labor strikes even in 1918. Coal piles were diminishing rapidly all over Ashmore, and when the Preacher had carried upstairs the last bucket of coal from

the basement coal bin for the cookstove (they had already been using every scrap of rough wood in the furnace), he said to the family, "Don't fret. We will be supplied with fuel to keep warm some way."

And that very day a coal train was accidentally derailed four miles west of Ashmore, so the mayor and other leaders in the town got mighty busy. The coal was hauled into Ashmore in an orderly manner, and fairly distributed during this emergency. Within a few days, the coal companies could be supplied from the mines near Terre Haute, Indiana.

Once more, faith in their Heavenly Father, and their assurance that He would care for them, was strengthened in the Preacher and in his wife.

War brought destruction and heartbreak to Ashmore and to the entire country in that winter of 1917. But at home in the manse, Preacher's wife seemed unable to recover from her coughing and whooping. She couldn't seem to regain her strength; she had never really been strong since the last baby, and the severe winter weather aggravated her general run-down condition. It was then that the family doctor recommended that the Preacher move the family to a climate with less severe winters and less dampness. The healing warmth of sunshine was needed for her health, their doctor-friend insisted.

As a result, the Preacher began to make inquiries as to churches who needed pastors in the Southwest. As a candidate, Preacher made a trip to Hobart, Oklahoma, during the early summer months. And after much prayerful consideration and an exchange of correspondence, the big decision was made! Another move to a different manse was planned.

Before Preacher and his family left Illinois, however, the dear friend, Rev. Spoonts, made a visit to the manse at Ashmore, with his wife. At the time of this visit, Spoonts christened both the new baby, Ruth, and the next youngest, Anna Lou. And that warmed the hearts of Preacher and his wife, for now all of the children had been dedicated and

christened by either the Rev. Spoonts or the Rev. Williams, the two ministers whom Preacher loved as his own father. It may be noted that both these older ministers often spoke and wrote of Preacher as "their very own son."

CHAPTER 9

Trek Over the Ozark Trail

IN AUGUST OF 1918, the household goods and two tons of red clover hay were loaded into one-half of a boxcar at the Ashmore railroad siding. You see, this Preacher's family nearly always had their own Jersey cow, what with six children to keep healthy. The one sure way of having feed on hand was to take along the necessary hay. Preacher had been warned of the hot, dry weather conditions in Oklahoma, and had been told that, during some of the seasons, not much feed was raised because of drought. So to him, the hay was just about as important as the household furnishings.

The good-bys were said, and some of them were quite tearful. Many members of the Illinois Morrises and their friends thought of Oklahoma as a land of uncivilized Indians, Wild West cowboys and a frontier of hardships. In fact, some even considered it "the jumping-off place," and even suggested that they would never again see Preacher and his family. But all conceded that if it meant better health for Mrs. Preacher, the trip West was well worth it.

Two weeks were necessary for the worldly possessions of Preacher's family to make the trip to Oklahoma by rail. But he and the children and their "Mom" set out in a big new cocoa-brown Empire touring car (complete with side-cur-

tains when necessary). The Preacher's family had long since outgrown the Maxwell.

The first night "out" was spent in the home of a fellow minister at Will, Illinois. The second day took them into St. Louis on what was then known as "The Big 4 Trail." In the city, the Preacher's family visited with aunts, uncles and cousins of his wife, and found much-needed rest in the home of one of the aunts. The third day, early in the morning, the big Empire headed southwest out of St. Louis on the Ozark Trail, now known as U. S. Highway 66, or the "Main Street of America." Narrow and steep grades up and down the mountains (and they were dirt or gravel roads, too) took two days of driving. So one night was spent in a small hotel, and the other at a farm home, before Preacher and his brood reached Springfield, Missouri, where they planned to visit more relatives.

Four days were spent in Springfield, visiting Preacher's cousins, and washing diapers and resting. Naturally on Sunday morning, Preacher occupied a pulpit — that of a Baptist church in which one of his cousins was a deacon. For there was never a Sunday, no matter where he might be, that Preacher failed to deliver a message of the "Good News of Christ," to anyone who might listen.

In the early morning hours, the family started out again, bound for Oklahoma. That night was spent in Bluejacket, Oklahoma. The next day they made it on to Bartlesville, where Preacher's dear brother, "Uncle Tom" and his wife, "Aunt Myrtle" Estes lived. For two days the traveling family rested; the necessary laundry work was accomplished. And the entire family immensely enjoyed the restful visit in this favored uncle's home.

Resuming their travels, they motored through Oklahoma City and on to Chickasha, near which was the home of Preacher's father, James Estes, and his family. The children had been looking forward to visiting in Grandfather Estes' home, and it was here that a most upsetting discovery was made! The big telescope suitcase, in which the "Sunday" clothes for most of the children had been packed, had been

soaked with the muddy, red waters of the Canadian River when they forded that river. Preacher had tied and wrapped all the "cases" with stout tarpaulins on the running board of the car, but this one suitcase had not been water-tight. There just was not enough time to launder all the clothes, for the roads were muddy, the driving slow, and Preacher was already behind schedule. All they could do was dry the clothing to prevent mildew, and proceed to their new home.

The trip over the country, especially through the Ozark Mountains, was most interesting to the older children who used road maps to locate rivers, towns and other important landmarks. Sometimes the roads were almost impassable, and more than once, kind farmers of the area would be waiting near the worst mudholes with their teams of mules to pull a car through. Some anticipated making a few dollars, but others were generous and neighborly Oklahomans who more often than not would say, "Nope, Preacher, I don't need your money. I'm a Christian and glad to help out a fellow in trouble."

Although the land was different, and the people strange, at nearly every farm home or cabin along the way was noted a service flag in a window, many with gold stars on them. A grim reminder of the war, but also a warm symbol of our national flag and a united country.

The Estes group arrived in Hobart late in the evening on Saturday, with no clean clothes for four little girls to wear on Sunday!

Hobart was the site of the only Presbyterian church in Kiowa County, and the congregation was a well-organized group of interested and happy people. The church building was extraordinarily modern, and boasted a large, beautifully installed Estey pipe organ. Preacher began his work here the first Sunday in September, just about the time school opened. And the family was again at home in the manse. It was a bit crowded, however, in the small six-roomed cottage, practically in the same yard with the church.

One of Preacher's first acquaintances was George Deihl, a farmer from one of the rural communities nine miles east

of Hobart. Deihl's parents had been friends of Preacher Estes in Illinois. Thus, another strong tie was made, and a lifelong friendship begun. The Deihls invited Preacher to come out to their schoolhouse to hold Sunday afternoon services. Regular preaching appointments were set for this, the Pioneer Community, where George Deihl served his church and school for many years. After the Sunday School was organized at the Pioneer School, Preacher drove out there every Sunday afternoon except for the times he was ill, for eight years. It was a non-denominational Sunday School, and well attended by farmers and ranchers from many miles around. The number grew, and Preacher held a three weeks' revival out there. At the close of this series of services, eighty-six persons made their personal professions of faith and were baptized. About forty of this number joined the Hobart Presbyterian church while the others joined the churches of their choice.

About a year later, Dr. Warren J. Wilson, chairman of the Rural Work Committee of the National Board of the Presbyterian Church, USA, visited in Hobart. He was so deeply impressed with the results of the work in the Pioneer Community, and the efforts of Preacher and his session, that he wrote a story for the Board of National Missions. This story was printed and sent to all churches throughout the denomination.

In another district near Hobart, called the "Stone Schoolhouse," a second Sunday School was organized, and Preacher held services for these people regularly. A third community school, called the Babbs Switch, on the Frisco Railroad, was the site of another Sunday School. In this school, about seven miles southeast of Hobart, Preacher held regular "preaching" days on Sunday afternoons, and members of the community carried on the Sunday School. Remarkable growth took place in all these rural communities where Preacher took time out from activities in town in order to work with the farmers and their families.

In town, the congregation was growing, and so much interest was displayed in the Sunday School that even a fine

orchestra was organized. Composed largely of young people of high school age, the orchestra was directed by Professor James Murphy, local music teacher. The Ladies Aid Society and the Guild were well-organized branches of the women's work, and accomplished great things.

During the "flu years" of 1918 and 1919, Preacher found many opportunities to work with branches of the American Red Cross. He and many others worked tirelessly during the epidemics, locating the sick, and a few times even finding some isolated victims in their little homes at the edge of town, already deceased. All available help was needed during this terrible epidemic. Anyone who could help with the nursing, did so, and others organized soup kitchens and kept them going. But there was some good to come out of such experiences, said Preacher, "for it was a wonderful way to meet new people and to serve old friends and neighbors."

In March, 1919, Preacher's busy times came to a halt. He became ill, acutely ill of appendicitis. It was necessary for him to undergo surgery, and Dr. Rogers of Clinton was called to Hobart to perform the operation. Preacher suffered peritonitis, and his own good doctor, Dr. Barkley, worked long and well to save him. When he began to mend, his recovery was rapid. In fact, two days after going home from the hospital, he got out of bed to conduct a funeral service.

Five other leading business and professional men of Hobart, together with the Preacher, organized the first Rotary Club in that area. Preacher was one of the charter members, and found the work interesting and inspiring. He thoroughly enjoyed lunching with the men, serving on community committees, and joking with the members. Lasting friendships were made among this number of "boys." In June, 1919, Preacher was named delegate to the Rotary International which was to meet in Salt Lake City, Utah. He enjoyed the convention activities, and returned home full of enthusiasm for spreading the idea of Rotary, and laden with pictures of Salt Lake's attractions and other souvenirs for the children. Soon after this convention, Preacher helped

organize a Rotary Club at Clinton, Oklahoma.

He became such an enthusiastic Rotarian that at a later date, during a 100% attendance campaign in the Hobart club, Preacher was called to Indiana to conduct a funeral service for a dear friend. In preparing for the trip by train, Preacher noted the meeting days of the Rotary Clubs along the way and planned his journey accordingly. His friends have enjoyed the story about the club at Mt. Carmel, Illinois, where Rotary met at noon on Thursdays. A fellow Rotarian wired ahead to Mt. Carmel, and the secretary of that club met Preacher at the depot, rushed him to the meeting place where he registered and ate hurriedly, then hastened back to the waiting train. It was the old L&N, and they say it actually waited twenty minutes so that Preacher could keep up his attendance record! Preacher was happy he could do his part in helping his own Rotary Club to achieve such a record. Then he continued on his way to Indiana.

During the happy eight years at Hobart, Preacher made friends with many Indians, one of whom was Chief Lone Wolf of the Kiowa Tribe. Years later, when the chief died, it was the sad duty of Preacher to assist with a Christian burial service for Lone Wolf. Three miles out from Hobart was a Baptist mission for the Indians. To this little mission, Preacher was asked to come to speak to the Indians gathered there. Not minding the heat and the dust, Mrs. Preacher would occasionally go along and play the organ. On one occasion, three Indian men and one Indian woman from the mission came to the manse asking that Preacher and his "woman" teach them the tunes and the words to "Brighten the Corner Where You Are," "Love Lifted Me," "The Touch of His Hand on Mine," and "Count Your Many Blessings." All these Gospel songs proved to be favorite songs of the Indians at the mission. The friends Preacher made among the Indians were among his most cherished throughout the years he gave to the church.

In February, 1920, the fifth baby girl, Lola May, was born to the family in the manse. Her appearance happened

to occur on the same night of a Rotary Club's Ladies Night affair. Well, this was one night when Preacher missed Rotary Club!

The family of the manse made a return trip across the country to Illinois in August of 1920, in the big, brown car which was pretty well loaded. En route, a stop for the week end was made at Nevada, Missouri, where it was discovered that the six-month-old baby was taking the whooping cough. She apparently was having a light case of the disease, so the journey was completed. The family camped out in the open along the way, much like gypsies, but their Indian papoose was none the worse for the adventure. One of the highlights of this visit with the friends and relatives in Illinois was the occasion of the christening of the last baby, Lola May, with her Great-uncle W. L. Morris officiating, at Grandview, home of the maternal grandmother.

Following his example of never staying idle on Sunday, Preacher delivered sermons two Sundays in his former pastorate, Ashmore, the site of the successful building program of both a church and a manse. Members of the Ashmore congregation, who were then without a pastor, at first hinted and later insisted that Preacher resign the Oklahoma duty and return to Ashmore. These persistent Christian friends almost persuaded Preacher that such a change would really be a part of God's plan. At any rate, he boarded a train for Hobart and left Mrs. Preacher and the "kiddies" doing "light housekeeping" in the vacant manse at Ashmore. Members of the church had temporarily furnished essential equipment in order for the Preacher's family to remain.

Down in Oklahoma, members of the Hobart church simply refused to accept the Preacher's resignation, and he finally reached the decision that his work in Hobart was unfinished. So busy was he with the demands of the community that he merely wired his wife the plans. So it was that Mrs. Preacher loaded the seven children, ages ranging from six months to fourteen years, into one of the railway passenger cars on the "Big 4" at the Ashmore depot.

One of the many incidents happening on this trip was

the time one of the little ones wandered off to see the inside of the wicker elevator in the Union Station at St. Louis where the family had to change trains. For a short time, redcaps and policemen were mighty busy looking for the stray.

They boarded a "fast" Frisco train, "The Meteor," which they took to Tulsa where they again changed for a branch train to Hobart. What a trip! But Mrs. Preacher was very happy to return to her home in the manse, with all the children hale and hearty.

In order to save expenses, and because no one in the family but Preacher could drive, the automobile had been left in Ashmore, and was driven to Kansas (state) by a friend. Within a few days, Preacher went by train to Hutchinson, Kansas, and returned to Hobart with the auto. So life in the manse was about back to normal!

Months of hard work and good planning culminated in the spring of 1922 when the Hobart Rotary Club chartered two Pullman coaches and sent every member of the club with their "Rotary-Anns," and all the members of the Boys' Booster Band (one of the civic projects of the club) to the District Convention in Wichita, Kansas. Thirty-two Hobart boys made up the band, directed by Mr. James Murphy. Among the boys was the Preacher's elder son, John Dillon, playing the cornet. Naturally Preacher and his wife went along.

The other children were left in competent hands at home, with wonderful neighbors assisting, and the trip was a joyous one for the Estes'. It was a wonderful experience for old and young — full of singing, practical jokes and good times long recalled by many who termed Preacher and his wife the "life of the party." The Hobart delegation used their Pullman coaches as sleeping quarters during the convention, for they were parked on a railroad siding throughout the convention. Years later, Hobart Rotarians were still joyously reminiscing of this trip, fondly referring to Preacher as "Brother Charlie."

Another outstanding trip in the life of this family of

the manse was an event of August, 1922, when Preacher's wife accompanied a delegation of young ladies from Hobart Presbyterial Society (a division of the denomination's women's work) to a summer conference held on Presbyterian Hill at Hollister, Missouri. A beautiful setting, along Lake Taneycomo on the White River, was the campsite, and Mrs. Preacher received a great inspiration from the example of God's handiwork in Nature, as well as from the fine program slated for the delegates.

Perhaps the greatest result was the fact that the three young ladies from Hobart who made up a part of the delegation, chaperoned by Mrs. Preacher, made a decision to devote their lives to the work of the church as life recruits for Christ. The three young ladies were Misses Margaret Lee Wright, Icey Buchanan and Lucile Heiney. They all later attended Presbyterian schools, and served for years as Christian Education Directors, church secretaries, Vacation Bible School leaders and youth work supervisors. Miss Wright later served as an assistant pastor at a church in Baltimore, Maryland, for many years after she attended McCormick in Chicago.

At the close of the Hollister Conference, Preacher's wife visited her mother and other family in Illinois. On her return trip home, she was almost stranded in St. Louis because of a railroad strike. She was able to catch the last train that ran before the strike stopped all operations, and reached Hobart safely where she found that Preacher, assisted by friends and neighbors, had served successfully as nursemaid with a minimum of mishaps.

More progress was reported by the spring of 1923. The governing board of the local church purchased the residential property across the alley, east from the house now occupied as the "little" manse. Large maple and locust trees shaded the lawn around the large two-story frame house. The property also boasted a large garden "spot" and a chicken house. Soon a new garage was built to give protection to Preacher's trusty auto — a necessity in his work. How the family enjoyed spreading out just a bit in this more

spacious manse. The house formerly used as the manse was sold and moved, making way for a large lawn at the side of the church building. This area was the scene of many garden parties and outside revivals, and even was used as a practice area for the Sunday School orchestra.

During the severe winter weather of January, 1924, the annual Week of Prayer was observed with a series of services at the Presbyterian church in Hobart. The temperature dropped, and the snow fell; so the furnace at the church was roaring. Either the furnace was overheated or the wind blew sparks onto the shingle roof — who knows? At any rate, at 7 P.M., just as the early worshippers were beginning to gather, the building caught fire! Great damage was wrought; the fire completely destroyed the roof of the structure; and the walls were partially burned. Many valuable volumes in Preacher's library were destroyed, and other editions were water-damaged. But due to some freakish way the fire spread, the large pipe organ was undamaged, except for some water and smoke damage to the mellow wood finish. One of the largest personal losses of the Preacher's was his visual aid equipment, a Stereoptican machine or projector, and his collection of slides.

The children of the manse long remembered the leaping flames that silhouetted the tall steeple of the church that night. They helped Preacher to check his books, cleaning, drying, airing and sorting the ones that might be rebound. This experience made a deep impression on the seven children of the household, and no surer way of teaching fire prevention could be used! Fire-safety was just nearly as important as the Golden Rule.

Regular services observing the Week of Prayer were held as usual that year — in the Kiowa County Courthouse. And a rebuilding program was immediately started and soon completed. Just another big task in Preacher's ministry.

Interest and activities out at the Babbs Switch Sunday School increased so much that, in November, 1924, following a series of meetings Preacher conducted out there, a Christian Endeavor group was organized under the sponsor-

ship of Miss Terry, the schoolteacher who was also a member of the Presbyterian church in Hobart. Young people of this group planned and rehearsed an extraordinary program of entertainment to be held in the school building on Christmas Eve. The building was cleaned up, repaired and painted with the help of volunteers in the community. And last, the tall, beautiful cedar tree was added, complete with colorful adornment and branches tipped with many small candles which would be lighted at the last minute.

Gifts galore were piled deep around the base of the tree which had been wrapped in cotton batting to simulate snow. For many families in the area used this occasion for "Santa Claus" to visit their little ones. Nearby was a box of "Christmas treats" bought and wrapped with loving care by teachers and officers of the Sunday School. The one-room building filled rapidly as the hour for the program drew near, for lots of visitors attended the Christmas tree program! Just as the program got underway with the singing of carols, one of the tiny candles slipped from its holder on the tree and immediately a string of decorative rope caught fire.

One of the visitors (who was said to have been celebrating the holidays in the wrong way) tried to knock down the little blaze by striking out at the tree with a small "Sunday School" chair. The chair failed in its mission, but did knock down a kerosene lamp which fell near the pile of gifts. In an instant, gifts, cotton, decorations, tree and all were blazing. And before anyone could lead out the tiny tots who had gathered as near the tree as possible, the entire room was full of flame. The newly painted walls and ceiling seemed to catch fire instantly!

There was no escaping! The windows were permanently screened with heavy hail-screen wire fastened on the outside. And the only exit was at the rear of the school, a door which opened into the room. So very few escaped before bodies were piled like cordwood about this one doorway.

Word of the tragedy reached Preacher just as he was leaving the Christmas program at the Hobart church — leaving a bit early in order to attend the "Christmas Tree" out

at Babbs. The fire whistle and all church bells sounded the alarm, and Preacher joined the other helpers who rushed to the burning schoolhouse. Thirty-six bodies, burned almost beyond recognition, were recovered from the smouldering ashes. To assist in this task, the utility companies in Hobart sent out men and trucks and long-handled forks and shovels, which were used literally to scoop out the dead.

Throughout the night, victims of the fire were brought to the hospitals in town, and all who knew anything at all of nursing were pressed into service. The one funeral home could not take care of all the victims, so other places were used until proper identifications could be made of the charred and twisted bodies.

Immediate attention went to those who lived; suffering and bandaged, they lined the corridors of the hospitals, on cots, on chairs, on beds — awaiting their treatment. Among the helpers tending the victims that night was Preacher's wife.

Christmas gifts went unopened that year at the manse and throughout the county. Preacher, with hundreds of other leaders, worked all through the night and all of Christmas Day trying to identify the dead — a heartbreaking duty, for Preacher had learned to love the people of Babbs Switch Community as he had worked with them. In the manse, the turkey prepared the day before had to be cooked to prevent spoilage, but it was not stuffed, and the "trimmin's" were not added. Quarts of soup and broth were made of it to be served the sick. Groups of local women organized to work in shifts at the hosptials, and to serve the families broken by the tragedy.

Preacher planned and officiated at the funeral services for most of the victims. Some of the dead with relatives still alive were given individual funeral services. Many complete family units had died together that Christmas Eve.

But twenty-one of the victims were so badly burned they were never positively identified. So a "Community Grave" was planned. A never-to-be-forgotten sight — twenty-one caskets lined up and interred. Great numbers from through-

out the Southwest attended the solemn Memorial Service in honor of all the victims. Preacher directed this service, one he later referred to as perhaps the most stirring moment of his ministry. Among the funerals he conducted that week was one for a family of four — all victims of the fire, either directly or indirectly.

The largest single group who died that night were the members of the Babbs' Christian Endeavor Society, and their sponsor, who had worked tirelessly trying to get the youngest children of the Sunday School out of the way of the fire.

As a result of this fire, legislation immediately was passed regarding the use of candles on Christmas trees and at other public gatherings. New laws were written regarding the construction of all public buildings, schools, churches and the like, requiring numerous well-marked exits with doors hung to be opened to the outside, and certain regulations were set up concerning window screens of public buildings.

Another result of the fire was the building of a new brick, model fireproof school to replace the small frame one destroyed by fire. Preacher worked closely with the directors of the Babbs School on the planning of this structure. When it was dedicated, he spoke with tears streaming down his face. It was a memorable occasion for all the residents of that area.

Prior to the Babbs tragedy, Preacher had made plans to officiate at the wedding of his niece, Miss Winnie Estes, in Bartlesville on January 5. Winnie was the daughter of Uncle Tom and Aunt Myrtle, and she was very dear to his heart. But on this occasion he had to say "No," for he felt he could not leave the saddened people who were still caring for the sick and dead of the fire.

Varied experiences came to this family in the manse while living in Hobart, and many were the wonderful lasting friendships formed in this field. Among the dearest friends were two families in particular, all active workers in the church. But the two men had never joined into the fellowship of the church, although they attended services

regularly and helped in many ways to carry on the work of the church. When Preacher held his last regular service in Hobart prior to moving to another field, these two wonderful friends did make a public confession of faith and asked that their names be included on the church role. Preacher always said that waiting so long for such a glorious event was certainly worthwhile.

In the summer of 1925, another tragedy struck in Hobart, and one that directly affected the family in the manse. The members of the Junior Christian Endeavor Society and their adult leader attended a picnic at the Hobart City Park. Of the fifteen children present, thirteen became quite ill, and their cases were diagnosed as typhoid fever. The three youngest daughters of the family in the manse were among the number stricken, while the second son was one of the two children who played in the park on that picnic who did not contract the dreaded fever.

For seven long weeks Preacher and his wife and a friend, Mrs. Lora Wyatt, R. N., assisted every day by members of their congregation and by neighbors, tended the three little girls during their many days of high fever. Many other families in the church had at least one patient in their homes ill of the same disease, so the town was in an epidemic situation. All the children who made up the membership of the church's Junior C. E. did recover, although the convalescent period necessary for some of them was many months. Even today, the family in the manse can well remember the generosity of the people of Hobart, Oklahoma, that year — the "year of typhoid" — and can say the Lord always takes care of His own.

Preacher and his wife always felt a particular closeness to the wonderful people of that little city. Experiences such as that one reminded Preacher of the song, "If you have a kindness shown, pass it on; pass it on." And that is just what Preacher always tried to do — finding those he might help, and making the necessary contacts somewhere with someone, so help could reach the persons who needed it. In fact, the phrase "He went about doing good to all who came

his way," was often quoted in reference to Preacher Estes.

When the time came to move from Hobart in 1926, there were three children in the senior high school, one in junior high school, and two in elementary school. The parents in the manse had busy schedules with all the church-centered activities, but you may well see that they also had to be active in supporting the school teams, bands, glee clubs, school plays and the Parent-Teachers Association! Well, they were.

The children of the manse — with abilities and training — could always "fill in" if another were ill, or just couldn't make it for some other reason. Likewise, Mrs. Preacher always sang in the choir and did her share of "filling in."

Some of the joyous experiences of Hobart recalled by the family in the manse were the Sunday School programs and parties, especially those in the Primary Department, under the supervision of Mrs. W. M. English; then, there was the big wiener roast, a church-wide affair held out on the Big Elk Creek near the homes of Mr. and Mrs. John Naylor, Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Naylor and Mr. and Mrs. Kemper Hinds — all lifelong friends of Preacher and his family. Other gala affairs were the great trips made by the Rotary Club and the parties honoring the Rotary-Anns.

Children of the manse were always taught to help one another and themselves, and this reliability enabled the mother of the manse to attend many conventions such as Presbytery and Presbyterial Societies, Synodical meetings of the church and Rotary International meetings. Her very first Presbyterial meeting, which was the first of many, was at Frederick, Oklahoma, where she and Mrs. C. C. Clark attended as delegates.

One of the cherished honors that came Preacher's way was the time he was invited to deliver the annual Baccalaureate sermon to the graduating seniors of Hobart High School — not once, but SEVEN times out of the eight years he lived there! Quite a record for any preacher!

An avid interest in Four-H club work, and in purebred livestock, developed into a chief avocation for the Preacher.

He worked continually in improving agricultural methods and in raising standards of the livestock on the prairie farms of Oklahoma. It was he who owned the first Jersey cow to make the Register of Merit Test in Kiowa County. The children of the manse remembered well how Preacher insisted that the boys keep the stalls spotlessly clean, and how he checked and rechecked the quantities of milk produced, the percentage of butterfat, and the feeding schedules of that cow. This special one was named "Lady Lahoma," and she was the pride and joy of Preacher. The men of the community had a laugh when the County Agent called Preacher after this cow had had her first calf, and said, "Well, I guess the Lord was with you again, Preacher, for it's a heifer calf."

Friends in all walks of life were welcomed into the home in the manse, and among those who called were missionaries who had returned from various stations in far, far lands. They always found the welcome warm and the food ample at the big oak dining table in the manse.

During the twenty-one years of his life that followed after moving away from Hobart, Preacher returned there to officiate at funeral services for fifty of his friends — some from denominations other than the Presbyterian — and many were among the faithful members of the church "in town" at Hobart, as well as his groups in the country. Typical of Preacher's service to the people of Hobart were these return trips, even after his health was breaking.

CHAPTER 10

The Family Meets Texas

ONE OF THE MEMBERS of the Presbyterian church at Hobart was visiting her son in Dallas, Texas, and apparently bragged on her pastor to the Dallas minister, Dr. Glenn Snead, so much so that she really set into motion the chain of events which led up to — well, another part of the Preacher's story; for Dr. Snead's former home, McKinney, Texas, was in need of a Presbyterian minister.

After much correspondence, Preacher made a trip down to the city of McKinney. He found the field much in need of a pastor who knew something about the construction of new edifices. And it was interesting in other ways — for he was beginning to feel that the Lord meant for him to go on — that the eight fruitful years at Hobart were ready to be turned over to someone else. After prayerful meditation, Preacher decided he would submit his resignation, and the usual procedure of changing churches began.

You see, the prospect of another building campaign was something not to be treated lightly. So the call was accepted from the church at McKinney, Texas, and plans were made to move. The date was set for March. This meant a terrific interruption of school work for all the children, but as usual, the work of the church came first. So the household goods were loaded into two trucks and started Texas-way.

And the family followed — in the Dodge touring car. John D., the older boy, remained in Hobart to complete his senior year in school. The family in the Dodge got as far as Iowa Park, Texas, just across the Red River, where they rested and enjoyed a visit with one of Preacher's brothers, Arthur H. Estes, and his fine family of boys and girls.

Late in the afternoon on the second day, they arrived in McKinney, where they found the newly decorated manse, well stocked with deliciously prepared food — enough for several meals — and a generous amount of staple foods on the pantry shelves. The house itself was most inviting; the people who greeted them, most gracious; so the family was once more at home in the manse — where they had room enough for church gatherings, children's parties, and always the "front" room ready for any wedding.

The manse and the church building sat side by side on a hill, on Mounts Avenue. Additional attractions were a fertile garden spot and a rose bed, and some trees in the yard, affording some shade and a good place for a "bag-swing."

The church structure, dating back to Civil War days, was run-down, and an active campaign for funds had been underway for some time at McKinney. Therefore the subscriptions to the building fund became the popular topic of conversation. Gifts and pledges were made by all — large and small, and it was not so long before the organization moved into the theatre downtown for regular Sunday services, while the old landmark — the Presbyterian Church, USA — was torn down. The same site was cleared, and excavations were begun for the foundation of the new building, which would face the opposite end of the block — thus, the two-story part of the building housing the women's parlor, and some classrooms, would be nearest the manse.

The new structure was of buff-colored brick, with a full basement for a large dining room, fellowship hall, kitchen and rooms for children's classes. The sanctuary was large and impressive and designed to lend itself to a more worshipful atmosphere. Included in the building plans was a

comfortable and private study for Preacher, who spent many hours there in prayer and meditation and study in preparation for his sermons. Also, it was there that he received his numerous visitors, who unfolded their stories of joy and sorrow.

Upon the day of dedication of the new building, the total cost (approximately $25,000) had been met with gifts and pledges of the membership!

During the family's first summer at McKinney, Preacher introduced the children of the manse to many of their Texas cousins, and second and third cousins. A visit was enjoyed down in Covington, Itasca, Hillsboro and Meridian, where two of Preacher's uncles, their children and grandchildren, all lived. Uncle Tom Barron and "Uncle Bug" Barron (his real name was Henry) of Covington were especial favorites of the children in the manse.

As pastor of the McKinney Church, Preacher was a member of Dallas Presbytery, and he often attended meetings in Dallas. The children were studying Texas history in the public schools, so Mrs. Preacher began to study the same Texas history, too. Years later when the Lone Star State celebrated its Centennial Anniversary in 1936, Mrs. Preacher joined in and felt as much a Texan by adoption as anyone else. She had to keep up in some way with Preacher, who loved to boast of the fact that he was a Texan by birth!

The first Christmas season at the manse in McKinney was truly a White Christmas, for there was a beautiful snow for the first time on Christmas in twelve years. And how the children did love it!

A memorable visit at the manse during this time was the occasion when "Cousin Willie" came. She was Preacher's first cousin, Mrs. J. B. Barton of Itasca, a very attractive and vivacious person loved by all the children. The two older girls, in senior high school, still wore long thick braids of hair, sometimes tied with ribbons, and sometimes pinned into neat knots, low on their heads. Many hours of work went into the combing and brushing and parting necessary for them to look so sleek and neat, so the girls pleaded

with "Cousin Willie" to help them get permission to "bob" their hair and be like so many of the other young ladies. With a half-promise from the Preacher that he wouldn't scold too much, "Cousin Willie" cut Eleanor's braids, and it was quite an event in the manse on the hill. Lillian, the elder, however, decided that "Father knows best" and wore her hair in the long braids for another year.

As in their former home, the children took part in and enjoyed the class plays, the operettas, the ball games and all such school events. These were happy days, and the entire family enjoyed the town and the wonderful people who lived there.

But miles away, in Rolla, Missouri, there was a small Presbyterian congregation without a pastor, and they too had a building project to talk about. In addition, Rolla was located in the Ozark Mountains, a beautiful part of the state, and was the home of the Missouri School of Mines and Metallurgy. A former friend of Preacher's was living in St. Louis, and serving as Synodical Secretary. He began writing letters to Preacher describing the field at Rolla, the missionary opportunity in the hills, and the need for someone who could work with college-age boys, as well as with farmers. Inevitably, the call came, and after some exchanges of correspondence, naturally Preacher accepted. Not only was the building of another edifice important work to him, but also, he was thinking that the older girls would be soon ready for college, and they would be followed by the other children. So a college town seemed to be the answer.

How else could a minister's family send two boys and five girls to college? Probably there was another factor, for Rolla, Missouri, was just about halfway between home ties in Illinois and in Texas.

CHAPTER 11

The Move to the Show-Me State

IN SEPTEMBER OF 1927, the family in the manse said good-by once again, while the piano, the big oak dining table, and the other household goods were loaded into a freight car for the trip to the Ozarks. The children always enjoyed such jaunts, for they always had fun doing things together, and besides, such cross-country trips furnished quantities of "theme" material. Certainly the children were mischievous and loud on occasions, thinking up escapades, just as any other group of normal, hearty and healthy youngsters might be.

En route to Missouri, a night was spent in a tourist camp in Durant, Oklahoma, then, the following week end, in Waggoner, Oklahoma, where the Estes family visited in the home of another uncle, Sam R. Estes, Sr., pastor of the Waggoner Cumberland Presbyterian Church. The two families enjoyed greatly the visit and renewing of old ties. The children of the two Estes' homes certainly did enjoy the rough-and-tumble play. This occasion was one of the few times all the children in the two homes were together.

The Preacher's family loved the mountains and the scenery as they continued on through the Ozarks to Rolla, Missouri, a small college city located on two of the great highways of the nation: No. 66 and No. 63.

The manse at Rolla was an old structure in good repair and comfortable, but a bit unusual in arrangement. The house sat "at an angle" on the lot, so that the entrance faced the very middle of the intersection of the two streets. One entered the front hall where the staircase to upper floor was situated, and passed on into an elongated room consisting of three "areas:" that large central portion where the formidable base burner reigned, and which was used as a family living room, and where, also, stood the big oak dining table always ready for all uses, meals, lessons and gabbing; the second "area" was to the right and contained Preacher's roll-top desk (where the typewriter, an Oliver, was almost obliterated with stacks of notes and reference books) and several book-laden shelves nailed in and around the west windows; the third "area" was really a separate room connected with double doorways. This portion was the "front" living room complete with settee, piano and the music racks. This section was ever-ready for weddings, and was dusted each morning.

The large coal stove almost filled the kitchen, so all meals were eaten — three a day — in the very middle of the large three-area room, just out of the front hall. The family in the manse was fairly comfortable in the large three-bedroom house. Well, they did use a fourth bedroom upstairs, but it was in an oddly shaped little room which could be entered only by going through the bathroom!

Fraternity houses were all around. Opposite the intersection and filling a half-block was the home of the Lambda Chi Alphas; across the street was the Kappa Alpha; up the block and around the corner was the Sigma Nu; and others were not far. Also in the neighborhood were the Rolla Junior and Senior High Schools. And adjoining the very lot on which the manse was nestled was a large many-windowed shoe factory of red brick. So you see, there was, in fact, an ever-present hum of activity surrounding the Rolla manse, either from young people or machines.

Activities in the manse were not hindered by its location, and young people who were students at the School of

Mines soon were made welcome at all times here. It was an ordinary thing for the "Miners," or college boys miles away from home, to visit often, to help wash and dry dishes, to bring in the washing from the clotheslines; to help empty wash water, carry in coal, or to make and eat candy, pop corn or otherwise help with the chores. Making cocoa, pulling taffy, beating chocolate fudge and assisting in writing themes for freshman English assignments were ordinary activities, cooperative activities carried on by the Preacher's "kids" and the "miners." Within one year, students from seven different countries visited in the manse. The little city was full of students, and so was the manse.

The little old-fashioned church, two blocks away from the manse, was also full with a high proportion of college boys. Inadequate classrooms prompted the question of the congregation, "To build or not to build?" Times were changing; money was scarce; and the growth of this congregation — of the adults, that is to say — seemed at a standstill. After long and prayerful consideration, this small band of organized Presbyterians did purchase some property in a newer part of town for the purpose of a new edifice. But after another year, the trustees sold the lots to an oil company, and the building program was dropped.

However, the little church was remodeled, enlarged somewhat and repaired to meet better the needs of this congregation.

Big doings were going on in the manse when Preacher purchased the family's first radio — an Atwater Kent table model topped with a large round speaker, and also equipped with earphones. The family of nine in the manse and their numerous visitors spent many hours around this impressive appliance. Political conventions were some of the earliest remembrances of the youngsters on radio, particularly the Herbert Hoover-Al Smith battles in 1928. Among the college boys who spent much time visiting in the manse were some from Chicago (two especially who played football for the Miners and who always had their noses broken or otherwise scratched up from scrimmages); these boys would often

get homesick and would listen, as late as Preacher would permit, to the music broadcast from the "Black Hawk Restaurant" and other spots in Chicago.

Members of the Preacher's family were privileged to make their own radio broadcasts when they went to Jefferson City, Missouri, to present a "Rolla Program," sponsored by the local Chamber of Commerce. Preacher spoke, and three of the children participated in the high school glee clubs and in presenting "Penrod and Sam," a prize-winning declamation given previously in the Interscholastic Meet.

A few miles out in the country from Rolla was a small Presbyterian church in the community called "Elk Prairie," historic and beautiful. Preacher visited the people there, and two Sundays a month he conducted "preaching" for them.

Another neighboring settlement was the Belleview Community where a deserted church was actually rotting away — the building, that is. The Belleview people invited Preacher to visit them and to organize a Sunday School. After some time, the reawakened farmers and their neighbors built a new small church, erected on the site of the old one. Non-denominational Sunday School services were held here twice a month, and Preacher drove out there regularly to conduct these services.

In all these efforts, Preacher was assisted by a Sunday School missionary, the Reverend W. A. Boyd, who also was an elder in Preacher's congregation in Rolla. Rev. Boyd worked under the Board of National Missions in the Presbytery of St. Louis, and supervised more than forty Sunday Schools scattered throughout the mountains in six or seven counties.

The fine work of these two great Christian gentlemen can never be measured. Rev. Boyd traveled in a Model "T" Ford, taking along a portable pump organ. Sometimes he would, of necessity, drive up damp or dried creekbeds, and walk the rest of the way to hold a mission class on the front porch of some woodsman's home where the "folks" for miles around would be waiting.

In 1927, Lillian, the oldest of the five girls, was graduated with honors from Rolla High School, and traveled to Tulsa, to enter Tulsa College (formerly the Henry Kendall College, of which Preacher had been a director). At Tulsa, Lillian played the piano for girls' gym classes to help defray the expenses of her schooling.

In the same year, the second daughter, Eleanor, suffered a severe attack of appendicitis and was taken to St. Louis, where she underwent surgery in the Frisco Hospital. Since Rolla was a distance of 110 miles from the city, frequent trips there were big events in the lives of the members of the family in the manse.

At the close of one year at Tulsa University, Lillian still insisted that she wanted to become a nurse, so Preacher finally gave his consent and allowed her to enroll in the St. Luke's School of Nursing at St. Luke's Hospital in St. Louis. There she remained three years, for the regular course, for some orthopedic work at Barnes' Hospital and for her "Visiting Nurse's" work; and in 1932 she received her cap and her cherished R. N. degree. By this time, however, the Estes family had moved down Texas way.

In the meantime, life in the manse at Rolla moved with speed: Eleanor was graduated from R.H.S. and enrolled at Missouri Valley College at Marshall, Missouri. There she worked in the college dining room to help pay expenses.

About this time, Preacher realized that no matter how good the school, a boys' school of mining and engineering was not the best place to educate several daughters. Well, he began to pray for guidance. Strangely enough, the idea of Oklahoma kept popping up in the thoughts and the conversations of this family. And it might as well be truthfully stated that Stillwater, Oklahoma, the home of the co-educational Oklahoma A. & M. college, seemed the most likely solution. "Oklahoma" was just possibly the theme song of these children in the manse, for, at the moment, the problem was college!

"Man proposes, but God disposes," remained to be true. Soon the mails brought a letter inquiring, "Would Preach-

er Estes, since he is a native Texan, consider returning to the Lone Star State? Would he be interested at all in the town of Denton, Texas, the home of two fine state-supported colleges?"

Ideas and songs of Oklahoma were forgotten, then and there, for July was nearly gone; vacation from school was waning; and this seemed to be a part of more than mortal's plans and desires.

Accompanied by one daughter, Eleanor, who was interested in Texas because of her "best" friend, Mary Elizabeth Hughes, living in McKinney, Texas, Preacher visited Denton the town, and the church. Apparently the visit was mutually pleasing, for in due time the official call came from the Denton elders, and the Preacher accepted.

Once again, good-bys were really sad, for all the family had been actively engaged in living, loving and making friends. Junior high and high school ties seem the strongest, sometimes, and furthermore, Lillian was left behind in St. Louis to complete her nurse's training. So this was certainly a sad farewell.

The accumulation of the years in such items as rocking chairs, library tables, books, lamps, the piano and the big oak dining table, the Haviland "wedding" china and the family silver, were all once again loaded into a freight car. The family piled into the Ford sedan, sadly. For all the youngsters felt they were leaving "the best friends they would ever have" behind.

If it were not for "going back to Texas" for the Preacher and his crew, he would indeed have had a bad time getting the children to leave — or so they thought.

CHAPTER 12

Texas-Bound in 1930

ON LABOR DAY, September 2, 1930, we find the family leaving Rolla via a long, hot and dusty detour on Highway 66. They spent the first night at Vinita, Oklahoma, in a tourist camp, then drove on into McKinney, Texas, late in the afternoon for a brief visit with old friends. They arrived in Denton just about dark, in time for supper.

And what a supper! It was served in the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. W. McClurkan, with many of the church officers and their wives assisting — and watching. At the large manse, the newly varnished floors were not quite dry, so the Estes family was divided into pairs and invited to spend the night in the homes of various church members. After two days of driving, the children felt mighty dirty and rumpled and not very presentable to be introduced to so many strangers so quickly.

All were refreshed by early morning, which was moving-in-day; and before evening the family was once more truly at home in the manse.

This particular manse — and it, too, became a very special one for all the Estes' — was a nine-room, two-bath, frame house, high on a hill near the Denton Junior High School, the Senior High School, and about six blocks from the "square." Five blocks away to the east was the church build-

ing, and for the first time in many years, the Estes family really missed living next door to, or near, the church building.

Preacher and his wife had always felt it most convenient to live near the church, especially when the children were small, although it sometimes meant that Mrs. Preacher had to lay in an extra supply of salt, sugar, tea, coffee or soap before a church supper. But this was always gladly done by the homemaker in the manse, for she considered such little things as part of her job. Besides, many, many times she was made a gift of any foods left over, and she always got the chickenfeed or "scraps" to help in feeding her two-legged "biddies" in the back yard. For this family nearly always had a few chickens and at least one registered Jersey cow to help expand the larder. In fact, such livestock was one of the family's prized possessions, and understandably so.

Next door lived the C. L. Oliver family, who fast became close friends to the Preacher's family. Dr. Oliver, a dentist, had milk goats, while the Preacher had his Jersey; and the children of the two homes had many hours of fun together, teasing, kidding, and later, double-dating and growing up together. This lovely family remained close friends throughout the years, and Mrs. Preacher counted Mrs. Oliver as one of her "special" friends.

At the opening of the fall session of school, Eleanor was enrolled in North Texas State Teachers' College; Charles Morris and Anna Lou, in high school, as a senior and sophomore, respectively; Ruth, in junior high; and Lola May, in the West Ward. The parents in the manse found themselves busy with the Parent-Teachers' Association, the Sports Club, the football and basketball activities, and other extracurricular activities. But the main task at all times for the Preacher and wife was to do the will of God, with and for these good people of Denton, and also for the hundreds of college youth there. Here began a grand work that lasted five years with not one uneventful day in all that time.

"Our Young People" were the most talked of folks in the church. There was a large group of local, interested

and talented youngsters in the congregation, and this number was swelled by the scores of college students enrolled in what was then the College of Industrial Arts, and the North Texas State Teachers' College – wonderful institutions for boys and girls seeking higher education.

Here again, as in other fields, the Preacher and the Denton congregation faced the same old problem: inadequate buildings to serve the needs of the people, especially the younger ones. Previous to Preacher's coming, this membership had purchased a large corner lot and was in debt for the property. The red brick sanctuary was in need of repairs – major ones. The officers felt that the indebtedness should be cleared before any other progress was begun. Notwithstanding, a building fund was started, and the Women's Auxiliary made many of the payments for the new lot.

At the end of his first year in Denton, Preacher, during one of the congregational meetings, voluntarily took a reduction in salary, provided that the same amount of money be applied on the "new location." These were the depression years; church pledges sometimes could not be met; offerings were small; and, with three children in college and two in high school, this decision of the Preacher's was made only after much prayer for guidance. It represented very definite sacrifices for all the family in the manse, for some time to come.

Through church, school, civic and college activities, new acquaintances were made every day. New friends grew out of these meetings. Visiting students and their parents were welcomed at the manse. Many a homesick girl and boy enjoyed the hospitality at the "Preacher's House on the Hill." Frequently, "blind" dates were contrived by the children for other friends, for, you see, with one daughter in the girls' college and another daughter and a son at the teachers' college, the Preacher's family was a natural halfway place for students of both schools.

Every Sunday at noon, the big dining table was stretched to its limits to include three or four extra places, which were nearly always filled by visitors, either formally invited

in advance or of the drop-in type. At this big oak table, boys and girls dined, worshiped and laughed, much as they might have done in their own homes. Everyone helped wash dishes, clear the table, and dry dishes, then all would join in singing, playing the piano, telling jokes or indulging in plain, ordinary "gab fests."

During the stay in Denton, nineteen different college students were "at home" in the manse for several days, weeks or semesters, until proper rooming and boarding places could be found for them. Three students spent as much as an entire school year with this family. They were Miss Mary Elizabeth Hinds of Hobart, Oklahoma, Miss Jack Virginia Barron of Covington, Texas; and Miss Margaret Estes, a cousin from Norge, Oklahoma.

W. A. Stanley of Plano, Texas, stayed with the family in the manse nearly a year, and Lloyd Stowers visited temporarily until permanent rooms could be found. Miss Marian Arnold, daughter of the Presbyterian minister at Cleburne, Texas, lived in the Estes home for a while. All these boys and girls loved to sing as much as the children of the manse, and many a joyful and noisy hour was spent by all. Popular music, rounds, parodies, etc., made up a large part of the entertainment, but the religious side of life was ever felt. All who lived here took very active roles in church-centered activities. Young Stowers, one of the house guests, later was graduated from the Presbyterian Seminary at McCormick, and is now a Presbyterian minister.

The entire family planned college as a matter of course, as do most of the residents of Denton. Various members of the faculties of the two colleges were listed among the friends of the family in the manse. And the children had marvelous and rare opportunities to meet and to interview and to hear performances by visiting celebrities, including the late Amelia Earhart, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Vladmir Goldschmann, Ruth Bryan Owen, Ted Shawn, Eleanor Roosevelt, Wallace Beery, Carl Sandburg and others.

Preacher was an active member of the Denton Lions Club and of the Denton Farm Club, composed of county

farmers and businessmen interested in better farming. They met on Saturday nights twice a month, and here lasting friendships were formed by Preacher. He also worked in the Jersey Cattle Club and served this group as president for one term. Agriculture development continued to be of great interest to "Preacher" Estes, as he was now called by so many men in all walks of life. He enjoyed giving much of his time to 4-H Club work for boys and girls in the county. He was nearly always ready and willing to assist the County Agent and the Home Demonstration Agent in their projects and their public meetings.

One instance, proof of the fact that friends and visitors were welcome at all times in the manse, was the visit of Mr. and Mrs. Prentice Barnett of Valley Mills, Texas. He had been a classmate of Preacher's years before, and the Barnetts arrived in Denton while Rev. and Mrs. Estes were attending Synod and Synodical in Texarkana one October. The girls of the manse had not expected their parents home that night, so they cleaned up the "master" bedroom of the manse for the Barnetts.

Late in the night, Preacher and Mrs. Estes returned home, only to find their bedroom already occupied. Everybody had a good laugh over this incident, and cots were put up for two of the youngsters. Soon all were sleeping peacefully in the manse, which was certainly full that night.

When the Texas Synod and Synodical met in Denton, Preacher and his church officers worked long and hard as pastor and church host. He loved performing every small and large duty, however. Among the guests at this time in the manse was Dr. Cleland B. McAfee, chairman of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, USA, and Dr. A. B. Keeler, chairman of the finance department of the Board of National Missions, both of New York.

On another great occasion during Religious Emphasis Week at the two colleges, guests at the manse were Dr. Daniel Poling and Dr. Ira D. Landrath, one-time national president of the Christian Endeavor movement, and president of Randolph-Macon College. Other visitors during this

meeting were Dr. J. C. Burma, Dr. A. B. Hodges and Dr. Matthew Arnold, all outstanding leaders in the denomination in the Southwest. Memorable visits also were made by other Presbyterian ministers and evangelists, including Dr. Jaspar Manton, Rev. Reece Jones, Rev. Everett B. King, Dr. George Fender, Rev. R. L. Hogan, Rev. Alvin Carter, and many others, all devoted to the work of the Kingdom of God, and all intimate friends of Preacher Estes.

In 1932, the eldest daughter, Lillian, was graduated from the nurses' training school in St. Louis, and she came to Denton to do special nursing duty. Within a few months, she was made night supervisor, then superintendent of the Denton Hospital and Clinic, where she worked for more than eleven years with Dr. M. L. Holland and his associates.

Some of the women of the church, especially Mrs. A. J. Swenson and Mrs. A. S. Keith, both of whom were professors' wives, made it possible for Mrs. Preacher to make the trip to St. Louis to attend Lillian's graduation exercises. Preacher stayed at home with the other children, for the Commencement exercises for the Denton High School were held on that same night. One of the daughters of the manse, Anna Lou, was delivering the Valedictory Address at that ceremony. After the program, Preacher treated all the children to an ice cream soda at Brooks' Drugstore on the Denton square. This was quite an occasion, for hardly ever was there money or time for such treats.

Lillian loved being a good nurse and still does, for she has made many staunch friends during her years of service to the Denton area, helping babies to be born, standing by when the aged die, working swiftly and efficiently in times of accident — she has forged for herself a permanent place of honor in the hearts of all Dentonites.

In January, 1934, Eleanor was graduated at NTSTC, majoring in elementary education. She went "West" to teach at Jacksboro for her first "position." Since classes at the teachers' college were not so large at that time, the school had only one graduation program for the regular session of school. Mid-term graduates were invited to return

to the campus in June for the commencement and baccalaureate services.

This June, the members of the Jacksboro school board thought Eleanor should remain at her job, since it was at the close of the term. So she was unable to return to Denton for graduation. Believing that she would be able to attend, Eleanor had signed up for the cap and gown, had been scheduled a place in line, etc. Therefore, she asked her sister, Anna Lou, to don her cap and gown, and to be her proxy. As such, Anna Lou took the assigned place in the lines and marched across the platform to receive the diploma from the president of the college, who congratulated her, saying, "You have made a wonderful record, Margaret Eleanor!"

During the summer of 1934, the elder son, John Dillon, returned to Denton from Missouri, where he had been working, and took some special work in music at the teachers' college, where he played cornet in the stage band and was active in other musical circles. He later married Miss Mary Bess Austin from Sherman, a student at the time at CIA, and together they moved to Fort Worth to make their home.

In December, 1934, the family in the manse had their first experience of announcing an engagement and in planning a marriage. Eleanor brought the Jacksboro coach home with her one week end and, from all appearances, the family knew "this was it." His name was J. L. McCullough, and his home was Dallas, where he had attended the public schools, and later gone to Rice Institute at Houston where he had been graduated.

Each member of the family had some part to play in the parties which followed. The announcement tea, of course, was the first big affair that fall, and the wedding was set for Christmas Day at 6 P.M. Again, all the family participated and Preacher officiated. Miss Lillian played the traditional wedding music on the piano, and Anna Lou was an attendant. Charles Morris lighted the candles, and the two younger girls, Ruth and Lola May, assisted in serving the cake

and coffee. And all the ladies of the church stood by with their able assistance. So it was quite an affair.

Nearly all of Preacher's time was needed with the activities of the church at Denton, but he still found time to render service to the smaller churches in nearby communities such as Krum, Grapevine and Justin. Hardly ever did he miss a Sunday holding afternoon services at some church or schoolhouse. On some of these occasions, Mrs. Preacher accompanied him, but more often she remained at home chaperoning the "bunch," for all the girls, and sometimes Charles, too, had their "dates" at the manse nearly every Sunday afternoon. In addition, there would always be visiting boys and girls of all ages—taking part in games, singing, making candy or conversing in serious tones on the big porches of the manse.

A regular Sunday afternoon visitor at the manse was Tom Mitchell, son of Mr. and Mrs. Bob Mitchell of Denton. Tom came to see Ruth regularly for five years, and they later married. Tom was the only Denton boy to "win" an Estes girl from the manse.

While living in Denton, Preacher and his wife had the privilege and gratification of seeing four of their children receive their degrees from higher institutions of learning. Lillian, from St. Luke's School of Nursing; Eleanor and Charles from NTSTC; and Anna Lou from CIA (later changed to Texas State College for Women, and still later, to Texas Women's University).

Charles received his Bachelor of Science Degree August, 1934, and accepted a position as principal of the elementary school and coach at Carbon, Texas, where the peanuts grow. It wasn't his first job, for he worked at grocery stores, filling stations and in the lab at college. But it was his first time in West Texas and away from the manse. He served as scoutmaster, then even (to his surprise) found himself directing the music at the Methodist church in Carbon. He had had little formal musical training, but had enthusiastically taken part in high school and college glee clubs, in the church's Young People's Quartette, and just the ordinary

singing that always seemed to go on at the manse. He filled every minute of his days just making himself useful to the little community of Carbon.

When driving Charles M. to his job at Carbon, Preacher visited, in Eastland, Texas, the home of the famed "Old Rip" horned frog. There, he learned, was a small Presbyterian church, nearly extinct. Many of the members had moved away from Eastland during the depression. The small manse was in need of rebuilding, but the sanctuary was in good shape and was well tended by the few faithful members of the congregation. Preacher saw at once that here at Eastland was a "real job" for a minister with a mission — for someone who could possibly work to salvage what was left of the organization, and to do so for the glory of the Lord.

During 1934 and 1935, Preacher really worked too hard, and finally had to face the fact that his body could no longer continue at the rate he had been living and working. Duties of the Denton church increased daily, and he had long realized the need there for a student pastor. But there was none to be had and little money for such projects. College students attended the services in increasing numbers, and Preacher continued to drive himself to get around to everything.

The Building Fund at Denton was making very slow, if any, progress, but some of the workers and officers refused to become discouraged. To build a new building sufficient to the needs of the Denton congregation required a large sum of money, but the faithful ones insisted that the new building would become a reality.

One of Preacher's "pet" projects was initiating a Young People's Retreat and camp-conference at Lake Dallas. He helped to establish such a camp as an annual project for the Presbyterian church at Denton. This was a big task, but he had lots of able assistance in planning the schedule of classes and worship, securing the teachers and chaperones, and making arrangements for using one of the college campsites at the lake. He was proud of his assistants from the young people, and the other workers from his congregation. These

annual Youth Retreats became well known as important features of the youth work in the church for developing meditation, inspiration and recreation experiences.

Later on, however, Preacher again had to admit he was not well enough to continue the rapid pace of activities. Medical advisors suggested that to continue as he was working might mean nervous exhaustion for him. He realized he was growing older, that his job might very well be with a smaller congregation, with fewer demands on a pastor. He knew also that a younger man might better serve the Denton field.

He had not forgotten the neglected church at Eastland; so, in due time, he made some inquiry. Officers of the Texas Synod and especially the Abilene Presbytery discussed the opportunities at Eastland and used some real persuasion on Preacher after they heard he might be interested in a smaller congregation. So in March, 1935, he submitted his letter of resignation at Denton and left for Eastland to begin a terrific rebuilding job — of a congregation, not a structure, this time.

This project was partially under the auspices of the Board of National Missions, and the arrangement included part-time preaching at Strawn, a few miles east, as well as at Eastland.

CHAPTER 13

West Texas Dust Storms

ALTHOUGH PREACHER HAD GONE to Eastland in March, Mrs. Preacher and the children remained in Denton until later because of school. Ruth was graduating from Denton High that spring. She had been selected May Queen and had earned other honors. But on the night of her Junior-Senior "Prom," her steady boy friend, the same Tom Mitchell, was unable to get off work to escort her. As a young boy, Tom had started selling popcorn at the Denton theaters, and, by this time, was holding down a very responsible job at the show.

Lola May, the baby, was busy with her high school activities, and Anna Lou was a junior journalism major at TSCW. So everyone of the girls was "snowed under" with classes, work and school activity of some kind.

At any rate, "Nannie" (as Mrs. Preacher was familiarly known to all the youngsters and their friends) remained in the manse with the three schoolgirls, while the Preacher moved his books, desks, typewriter and a few essential pieces of furniture with which he did "light housekeeping" in the grubby little manse at Eastland. During the weeks he was there alone, he did many of the minor repairs the house needed with his own hammer and saw.

At the close of the spring semester, Anna Lou and

Charles joined him, and the house was papered and painted —the interior, that is — and the three of them batched until the end of the first summer session of school, when the whole family was again united late in June. They spent a happy summer in Eastland where the youngsters met many nice young girls and boys. But they always felt cramped in their quarters, especially after moving from the very large house in Denton. Actually the Eastland manse consisted of only five small rooms, supplemented with a long sleeping porch for the overflow.

School bells rang again in September, with Anna Lou returning to Denton for her senior year at TSCW, where she had been elected editor of the weekly campus newspaper, *The Lass-O*. During this year, the publication made all-American rating for the first time — a record of which the school, the journalism department, and the family in the manse were justly proud.

Ruth enrolled for some post-graduate work in typing and shorthand at Eastland High School where Lola May was attending. Charles was teaching, and Eleanor's husband was coaching at Mesquite. So the opening of school terms everywhere vitally affected the entire family.

On Christmas Day, 1935, the first grandchild of the family in the manse, discovered America. A little girl, Margaret Ann McCullough, the little daughter of Coach and Mrs. McCullough of Mesquite, was born at the Denton Hospital, with big sister of the new mother, Miss Lillian, as head nurse.

At the end of school in the spring of 1936, Lola May was graduated from Eastland High, and the PTA ceased to be a regularly scheduled activity of these parents in the manse. This was the second time the Preacher's family had had two graduating at the same time, for Lola May received her high school diploma the same week that Anna Lou was given her college degree, a B.S. in journalism and English.

Events, important ones, continue, even during the aftermath of a depression. And especially is this true in a large family. On Thanksgiving of that year, Anna Lou was mar-

ried in the Presbyterian Church at Graham to Ed. B. Hart, a young businessman of Olney who was employed in an automobile agency just across the street from *The Olney Enterprise,* the weekly newspaper where she was employed as society editor, news editor and general "flunky." They were married, and then came home to the manse to disclose the good news. This was one children's wedding at which Preacher did not officiate.

Along about this time, the two younger girls came home from Denton where they had been in college, because finances just could not be stretched to include the costs. They both found jobs in Eastland, and Charles was teaching at Breckenridge. The Estes family was more or less spreading out.

Preacher prayed and worked tirelessly, seeking the answer to these problems: reviving the congregation at Eastland and finding security for his family. But for the first time in his life, he seemed to meet with defeat. There were many drawbacks. But the biggest reason was that so few people, new citizens and particularly Presbyterians, were coming to Eastland at that time. And slowly but surely, some of the "regulars" and the faithful were being transferred away from there.

One of the highlights of his life at this time, however, was the opportunity he had of attending the evangelistic meeting conducted by the great Gypsy Smith at Abilene. This was an experience he never forgot.

Among the friends he made in Eastland was Judge Clyde Garrett, who shared the same birthdate with the Preacher, December 21. One of the fondest memories of the Eastland days was the birthday dinner the two gentlemen celebrated together, with their families. Turkey and all the trimmings were on the menu. And in later years, when Judge Garrett was a candidate for the office of Representative from the Seventeenth Congressional District of Texas, Preacher traveled with the booster caravans, making seventeen speeches to help his friend. The judge was elected, and

moved with his family to Washington, D.C., for the sessions of Congress.

Finances for everyone in those years were hard to manage, but times were "really hard" as far as money in the manse was concerned. Preacher, almost in the depths of discouragement and despair, felt it was imperative that he find another place to work, where he would be needed and be useful, and where he could better support his family.

The Sunday School missionary, Rev. J. L. Cleveland, who served the Abilene and the Brownwood Presbyteries, was a frequent visitor to the manse and had been a schoolmate of Preacher's in the early days. Through Cleveland's efforts, Preacher was introduced to the members of the session at the Winters, Texas, Presbyterian Church, and he forthwith went to visit them.

So in March, 1937, Preacher found himself and Mrs. Preacher resigning from the work at Eastland and Strawn in order to accept the pastorate at Winters.

CHAPTER 14

Westward We Go

FORTY-SIX MILES south and west of Abilene and not very far from the Presbyterian Conference campgrounds at Buffalo Gap, Texas, was Winters. It was a nice little city, with ranching and cotton as the chief industries. The church building there was a large red brick one with a full basement adequately equipped for all church activities. A very comfortable manse was next door, and it, too, was in good repair. So the family in the manse was once more at home, with only a wide expanse of lawn between the house and the church.

Throughout West Texas, dust and sandstorms were menacing farmers and ranchers, and water supplies were getting low at this time. And that year was one of the very worst, Mrs. Preacher remembers, for it was virtually her first experience with such weather. The water supply at Winters was "very hard," and not so tasty as it might have been. This situation was the source of many family jokes, because making suds and lather was almost impossible.

The work of the local church was growing, and Preacher and his wife did enjoy their Christian service. Especially did they look forward to the summer encampments at Buffalo Gap, where many old church friendships were renewed. Lola May was employed in the local hospital at Winters that

year, and Ruth returned to Denton to attend NTSTC.

Frequently, Preacher did not feel well, during that first year at Winters, and he began to face the fact that he was a "fur piece" from Denton, where his nurse-daughter, his hospital and his doctor were located. In the spring of 1937, he became seriously ill, rather suddenly, and was returned to the Denton Hospital in an ambulance. Treated for pernicious anemia, he responded to the blood transfusions and the medications, and was soon able to return to his work at Winters.

The following year, another wedding took place in the Preacher's family: Tom and Ruth finally set the date for March 1, 1938. Once again, members of the family had the pleasure of planning and arranging the activities surrounding the wedding ceremony. This one was to be held in the church sanctuary at candlelight time. Again the Preacher read the ceremony for his daughter, and Charles Morris "gave away" his sister. Lola May was her sister's only attendant, and Anna Lou, of Olney, lighted the candles. Among the out-of-town guests for the occasion were "Aunt Marjorie" Bennett, one of Nannie's (as Mrs. Preacher was now known) sisters, from Kansas, Illinois, Mr. and Mrs. John Naylor of Hobart, Oklahoma, beloved friends of the whole family, and some other relatives and friends.

During 1938, Preacher was given a signal honor: that of being named Grand Prelate of Texas for the Masonic Lodge. To clarify his lodge standing, it might be noted that Preacher had become a Mason while living in Newton, Illinois, in 1912, then in 1913 at Neoga, Illinois, he took the work in the Knights Templars. At Hobart, Oklahoma, in 1924, he had been made a member of the Shrine. Anyway, one of his old friends, and a former church officer at McKinney, was Will J. Rhea, who was serving as Grand Master of Texas. It was Rhea who suggested Preacher for the office of Grand Prelate. The two old friends attended a state convention in Wichita Falls, where Preacher had the honor of giving the speech on the opening night of the convention.

At Winters, transient workers helped harvest the large

cotton crops, and during this time, many small children, white, black and brown, were more or less left to roam the streets while parents worked. On some occasions, local officers called on Preacher Estes and Nannie for assistance in solving problems of delinquent children. The Estes' knew that homemade ice cream and cake could solve lots of troubles for "bad" little boys and girls, so on many Saturday afternoons they invited numerous children to play on the lawn and to eat refreshments.

The numbers increased until Preacher needed other help to feed and to entertain the group. Many members of his congregation co-operated in every way possible, but there were others, some of whom were officers in his congregation, who opposed such "missionary" work. Then there were those who felt that Preacher should devote more time and effort to the older members of his congregation, and "just leave those dirty youngsters to the law."

At any rate, this youth-conservation project became the center of friction in the church organization. In July of 1938, Preacher had attended a National Missions Seminar in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and when he returned to Winters, he discovered that some of his plans for the boys' project had been cancelled without his knowledge by some of the church workers. This incident brought him to the realization that he did not, and would never, apparently, have the full co-operation of some members of his own session.

After long meditation, and with no other special field of work in mind, Preacher submitted his resignation to the Winters church, effective October 1. Although he had no specific plans for moving anywhere yet, Preacher remained firm in his belief that a place would be found if he kept his faith.

After some time, a "place" found *them,* and their home was still to be in the manse, as Preacher already was sure it would be. But that is another story.

CHAPTER 15

Back to Farms with Greener Fields

IN SEPTEMBER, 1938, Preacher and his wife drove the "baby" daughter, Lola May, to Waxahachie, Texas, where she was enrolled in Trinity University. Upon returning, they visited a session of the Dallas Presbytery which was convening in their former home, McKinney. Officers of the church in a neighboring town, Celina, had written Mr. Estes previously, in regard to his coming to Celina, just a few miles from McKinney in North Texas.

Quite by accident (for our Preacher was definitely thinking of the little church in Celina), Preacher learned at Presbytery that the pastor at the Whitesboro church had resigned just the evening before Presbytery convened. This was another little town in North Texas, not far from McKinney. So Preacher and Mrs. Estes drove over to Whitesboro the following Wednesday, and Preacher was invited to return to deliver a sermon on Sunday, and to do so as a candidate for the pastorate.

Necessary arrangements for filling the pulpit at Winters were made by telephone with officials of Abilene Presbytery, and Preacher really "preached" that Sunday at Whitesboro,

The formal call was extended to him that night after a congregational meeting, and he accepted on the spot.

Preacher and wife returned to Winters, where he delivered his "farewell sermon" the next Sunday night. With deep appreciation, the Estes' were gladdened when the congregations of the Methodist and the Baptist churches of Winters met with the Presbyterians that night. Honorary tributes were made to Preacher and his wife for their great part in community as well as Christian service while in Winters.

At Whitesboro, our Preacher's family found a homey, comfortable little town, apparently just waiting for them. Called the "biggest little town in North Central Texas," Whitesboro is located between two county-seat towns, Sherman in Grayson County, and Gainesville in Cooke County. Surrounding the community in all directions were opportunities for rural church work, badly in need of rejuvenation, Preacher discovered. Since this type of Christian service had always held Preacher's interest, he set to work avidly. There was much to be done — actually more pastoring than could really be done by one man, for this area extended twenty-six miles north to the Red River, and about the same distance in other directions.

Rev. Whitwell, who had preceded Preacher at Whitesboro, had worked hard at this rural work and had organized a Sunday School in the Riverside Community, twenty miles north of town. Regular worship services were scheduled out there twice a month, and Preacher added to their calendar a regular Young People's Group meeting, and also made plans for Vacation Bible School sessions. Each fall, thereafter, Preacher conducted a series of revival meetings at the Riverside church. In one such meeting, an entire family, parents and nine children, received the sacred rites of baptism and were made members of the church. Most of the people who attended Sunday School at Riverside eventually moved their membership to the Whitesboro congregation in later years.

Four miles northwest of Whitesboro was another rural

community called Bones Chapel. There was located a school building and a small church structure, so run-down that it was unsafe for use. Work was begun at once on a new structure, after the old one was torn down. This little organization had been one of the oldest Presbyterian churches in Grayson County, so the passing of this old landmark took widespread notice in the area.

Members of this congregation at Bones Chapel were hard-working and devoted Christians, and Preacher was happy in his ten years of leading them. In August, 1939, people from far and near gathered to dedicate the new building. Prayer meetings of thanksgiving, praise services of worship, and finally a big dinner for all, took up most of the day. This was established as an annual homecoming, and has brought much joy to the hearts of the people as they return there each year.

The church in town also became more active, with membership slowly growing. Preacher's health was much improved by this time, and he probably did one of the best works of his life while in this field — as far as helping more people in all walks of life is concerned — and teaching them to live more abundantly.

If ever a place needed a pastor who was a man's man, this little city, with its surrounding communities, did. Preacher soon came to know and enjoy every man for miles around, business, professional, farmers and oil field workers — all. He just about knew the condition of each's spiritual life — for that was his business.

At Whitesboro, the manse was large, aged and very roomy — a place just right for this family to stage their homecomings, their reunions and to share their hospitality with all who might come their way.

Here again, the Preacher's family enjoyed planning and staging two other weddings for the children. The fifth girl, Lola May, had met her "special" young man while visiting her sister in Olney. So on September 4, 1939, Lola May was married to Theodore Rozsa, whose parents lived in Grand Rapids, Michigan. "Ted" was a seismologist employed by

the Shell Oil Company at Olney, but he had been transferred to Stroud, Oklahoma, before the wedding took place.

Preacher officiated at the ceremony in the church. Charles Morris presented the bride in marriage, and Anna Lou was her sister's only attendant. The other children who were able to come home assisted in the reception which followed at the manse. Many funny stories are told in the family concerning this event — when new fall clothes were in order, and the temperature soared.

The second wedding was May 2, 1941, when Charles Morris (now serving as principal and coach in Celina High School) was married to Miss Mildred Helms, who also was a teacher at Celina. This ceremony turned out to be a double wedding, for another couple, also teachers, decided to share in the wedding plans. The ceremony was at the church, with Preacher officiating, with a reception at the manse following. The rainy Friday evening did not seem to mar the joy and festivity of the occasion in honor of the two young couples, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Morris Estes, and Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Morrow. Guests attended from Celina, Denton, Honey Grove, Bonham and Whitesboro, and the manse rang with laughter that night. Also present for the affair were the family's dear friends from Hobart, Oklahoma, Mr. and Mrs. John Naylor and Mr. and Mrs. Perry Foltz.

Preacher and his wife had always been especially interested in seeing their children happily married. It was important to them that such an occasion be properly planned and dignified. Not only for their own children, but for many, many, many other couples — young and old — the Estes' made such arrangements and carried out ceremonies in the church and, very often, the manse.

A dark cloud of tragedy fell on the Preacher during this time, that seemed only to emphasize to those around him his great understanding, his humbleness, and yet, his great courage in the face of hardship, heartbreak and even physical danger. In the summer of 1940, a call came from relatives in Grandview telling of a criminal and fatal attack on Mrs. Edna Earl Allen, 19, daughter of Preacher's cousin,

J. E. Barron and Mrs. Barron of Itasca. A Negro man had been charged with the attack of the young girl, who was an expectant mother, and feeling was dangerously high in Grandview, and the neighboring towns of Itasca and Cleburne and Hillsboro. The colored man had confessed to the crime and was being held in jail.

Preacher and his wife went to Grandview to be with the girl's family, remaining throughout much of the ordeal. "Charlie," as the folks in Hill and Bosque counties called him, was one of the family, and in addition, he had officiated at the wedding ceremony which united his young cousin and Hortan B. Allen, the young grocery clerk, in November of 1938.

More than 1000 friends and relatives of the young couple attended the funeral service on that Sunday afternoon in the First Baptist Church at Grandview, where the Preacher read verses of scripture and spoke to them over public address systems. The crowd, shocked and saddened, contained many full of hatred and determined to avenge the girl's death.

Officials of the area gave credit to the Preacher's funeral message and his plea for the "course of the law" rather than violence, for quelling the bad sentiment that day. According to the Fort Worth *Star-Telegram's* story of the occurrence: "Rev. Estes plead for no interference with the process of law. 'We need to think and to think seriously and to act sensibly,' Rev. Mr. Estes said.

"He declared," the newspaper story continued, "in emphatic tones that civil government is a divine institution, deserving of greater respect than it is being accorded by American people today. He said he had never known a more dastardly deed than the one which cost the life of Mrs. Allen, but added that 'What's been done can't be undone.' He placed the blame for the crime on the fact that many persons have lost the proper respect for law enforcement and loyalty to good government. A secondary cause, he asserted, was the fact that many penal institutions 'are veritable breeders and trainers of professional criminals who are par-

doned or paroled and turned loose to prey further on society.' "

The newspaper stated: "Feeling continued high in Johnson County, Tuesday, for early trial of Harris," (the Negro who confessed) "but since Rev. Estes' funeral plea, County Attorney Lowell Crosier of Johnson County feels there is no danger of mob action as long as the Negro is kept out of sight. Harris is now in the Dallas County jail where he was taken Saturday night from the Tarrant County jail."

Numerous letters of praise for his words that day were received at the manse in Whitesboro following this tragic event. Apparently, the fact that Preacher represented the church as well as the victim's family, and that he stood on the side of law and justice, helped to change the opinion of the hundreds who were ready that day for revengeful action.

Throughout his Christian service wherever he lived, Preacher visited the jails and prisons regularly to encourage and to read scriptures with the prisoners. When he made his home in Oklahoma, members of the family well remember the regular speeches he made to the inmates of the State Penitentiary at Granite, Oklahoma, where one of his closest friends was warden for many years.

So you see, he was ministering at all times to all kinds.

CHAPTER 16

War Clouds

PREACHER AND NANNIE were in the manse alone after the two weddings. Members of the family were scattered into all sections of the country, busy in their chosen professions and making their own homes. How quiet life at the big manse would be!

But rumblings of war were heard, first distantly across oceans, then nearer home. And all kinds of new works were beginning for the Preacher. As chairman of the Red Cross organization in Whitesboro for several years, he carried out a variety of duties in that line of service. He was president of the Grayson County Child Welfare Board. He helped to reorganize the Whitesboro Rotary Club with "Service Above Self" as its motto. He was elected president of the Highway No. Ten organization (whose sole purpose was to seek the erection of a bridge spanning the Red River for Highway 10 connecting Oklahoma and points south towards Denton at the location then known as Willis Ferry. The proposed bridge was allowed, but postponed with the onset of World War II.)

When Camp Howse was built near Gainesville, hundreds and hundreds of soldiers entered that part of the state for temporary homes. Many found apartments and dwell-

ings in Whitesboro and the other small towns of the area, for the cities became overflowing immediately. Preacher was appointed chairman of the Whitesboro Soldiers' Housing Committee, and most of the time he *was* the committee, which served as a clearing house for all rental property available to boys in service and to their families.

The manse was always open to the servicemen, and finally Preacher and Nannie rented the extra bedrooms to servicemen's families. Preacher just could not turn them down, and many young couples made their home for weeks at a time in the manse, sharing the one bathroom, and eating at the large oak dining table, while the boys received their training at Camp Howse.

Preacher and Nannie enthusiastically planned wedding ceremonies for some of the boys and their girls, who might have traveled miles and miles to be wed in Texas. The manse fairly buzzed with such activities, and the Preacher always stood ready to help on any occasion.

Charles Morris had enlisted in the coast guard and was awaiting his call about the time the school semester closed at Celina in the spring of 1942. He and his wife, Mildred, moved to Denton, temporarily, to await both his call and the birth of their first child. Notice of induction came June 10, and Charles left for Manhattan Beach Coast Guard Station for his officer's training.

Three weeks later, the baby arrived — a boy named Charles William Estes II, born July 3, 1942, at the Denton Hospital. Within a few days, the new mother and son moved into the manse at Whitesboro with Preacher and Nannie. When Charles was stationed on a permanent basis at Manhattan Beach in September, his wife and son returned with him to New York after his first leave. Living in New York City was a new experience for the young couple, but Charles was happy in his work, for he was director of physical training and, naturally, coached the basketball team — most all of whom were much taller and heavier than he.

In large families, crises seem to occur simultaneously to all concerned, and this was certainly the case that September

of 1942, to the family in the manse: Preacher and Nannie were at home with the daughter-in-law and new grandson, when they received word that Lillian, the nurse, was to have major surgery the following day. The night before the scheduled operation, they received an S.O.S. call from Conroe that the daughter, Eleanor, was seriously ill of typhus fever — and there were two children at home. Their daddy, who was en route to Hutchinson, Kansas, to be inducted into the Air Force, could not be located.

After much conflab and planning, Nannie boarded the bus for Conroe, where she felt she was most needed. The Preacher was left in complete charge of the manse and the new grandson, and Anna Lou, with her one-year-old son, Eddie, Jr., drove from their home at Olney to Denton to be with Lillian during her illness. Such a mix-up of people and places was not uncommon in the family — this family in the manse.

One son-in-law, Lt. McCullough, finally was stationed at Ellington Field, Houston, near their home in Conroe. And by this time, Charles was stationed at New London, Connecticut, and John Dillon, at Marfa Flying Field. Tom Mitchell, Ruth's husband, was at Englewood, California, serving as an inspector for North American Aviation, and Ted and Ed were awaiting classification calls, and doing what they could in their home communities towards the war effort.

The birth of Charles William Estes II, that summer, marked the arrival of Preacher and Nannie's seventh grandchild, four of whom had been born at the Denton Hospital with Dr. Holland the attending physician, and Aunt Lillian, the chief nurse. The McCulloughs had two: Margaret Ann and Larry; Ruth and Tom had one son, Billy Tom; Charles and Mildred, the one son; Ann and Ed, one son, "Little Ed," as he was called; John Dillon and Mary Bess had one little daughter, Margaret Gayle; and Lola May and Ted, two children, Ruth Ann, and Sidney, the youngest of the grandchildren. He was born on September 16, 1947, at Jackson, Mississippi, and he was grandchild number eight.

All the babies had been christened by Preacher in Whitesboro, at one time or another. How very happy it made this grandfather to know he had the privilege of dedicating these young lives to the Lord! And what a blessing for these dear ones to remember, in later years, this ceremony, officiated by their beloved "Pappaw," as they all called Preacher. All these grandchildren except the very last one will always cherish the memories of their grandparents, "Pappaw and Nannaw," and the visits at the manse.

Most all of the children lived within driving distance of Whitesboro for holiday celebrations and other special occasions. Cars arrived at all hours of day and night, unloading children, toys and good food. What meals, what good times, around the big oak dining table!

The large Denison dam across the muddy Red River was completed, to form the huge lake just north of Whitesboro. One of the distinguished speakers for the dedication ceremonies of the dam was the Honorable Sam Rayburn, Speaker of the House of Representatives. "Mister Sam," whose home was in Bonham, Texas, was a personal friend of Preacher's, and had visited in the manse on several occasions.

In token of Preacher's active interest and hard work in connection with this government project, he was asked to make the Prayer of Dedication as an invocation.

The prayer he used, and which was broadcast throughout the nation together with the remainder of the program, is as follows:

Almighty God, how excellent is Thy Name in all the earth.

Thou art the creator of the whole earth and all things therein.

Thou hast endowed man with Divine Strength, vision, energy and skill to create and to complete mighty structures.

Thou hast created man for Thine own glory.

This day, we humbly give Thee thanks for this — one of

the greatest of all of man's undertakings, a completed work, by man.

Wilt Thou bless every part of wood, stone, steel, iron and the soils of the two great commonwealths connected by this structure.

We give Thee thanks for this mark of modern industry.

We dedicate this bridge, this link of world-traffic, to the controlling of mighty waters.

To the connection of the national highway over which shall pass travelers from all parts of the world.

With every improvement, bless our nation – Keep, bless and guide all in authority.

Bless all who have shared in making this possible.

Bless this historic occasion.

We humbly ask in the Name of Jesus Christ . . .

Amen.

Members of Preacher's family present that day were Nannie, the beloved wife; Lillian, and Mildred and son, Charles William Estes II.

The governors of Oklahoma and Texas appointed a committee to choose a name for the new lake and to allocate the shoreline property. Preacher was one of the men serving on this committee, and it was their job, working together with the army engineers, to locate suggested sites for camps, parks and resorts. Many names had been submitted for the big body of water, and the popular one offered seemed to be "Tex-Homa." Since there are already two towns of this name, Texhoma, Texas, and Texhoma, Oklahoma, members of the committee were reluctant to decide. During one of the long committee sessions, Preacher suggested that the letter "h" be stricken out. This suggestion of his was finally made into a motion which carried the group. And the lake was officially named "Lake Texoma."

Regardless of how many extracurricular projects Preacher undertook, his mission of preaching was always first. Many individuals who were directed to the Christian way of

life by Preacher's influence, joined churches of their own choice, as well as the Presbyterian church. But the thought that God used the Preacher as a mouthpiece to lead souls to Christ, was supreme in Preacher's mind. He daily prayed earnestly to be a blessing to someone each day.

During the war years, it became the Preacher's duty to take the messages announcing the death or injury or loss of many soldiers and sailors, to the homes of their wives and/or parents. This sad duty was carried out faithfully by the Preacher, who seemed to assume much of the load in such times of sorrow in helping the bereaved families. Many families in the Whitesboro community to this day remark that Preacher was better suited for such a task than anyone else known.

Also, it was he who conducted the first funeral service with full military rites in Whitesboro, for a local boy killed in World War II.

For the first time in three years, all the children of the manse were home together on December 21, 1945, to celebrate Preacher's seventy-first birthday. His birthday was on Sunday, and all the family sat together, as always, in church worship services that morning. How very proud Preacher was of that family group! And how he did beam on them. And how very proud all the members of the family were of their "Preacher."

It was a wonderful sermon that day, all the congregation said. As a text, Preacher had used the 35th verse of Psalm 37 — "Once I was young, now I am old; Yet have I never seen the Righteous forsaken, nor His seed begging bread."

In his honor, the family entertained with open house, and scores of friends came to call and to shake hands with their Preacher. That day in the manse was indeed a wonderful time, but it took its toll. The long week end of celebration was nearly too much for the seventy-one-year-old pastor, for on the following Monday evening (which was Christmas Eve, when the tree lights had just been strung) he became very ill. He was unable even to go to the church for

the Christmas Tree Program, which was an annual affair of good music, recitations, and surprises for young and old.

On Christmas Day, his condition was worse, and his blood pressure sailed sky-high. His friend, Dr. Holland from Denton, came over, and diagnosed the case by saying, "If it is at all possible to be sick with happiness, I think Preacher is." Several days of complete rest in the hospital renewed his vigor and energy, and Preacher was up and about his "Father's work" before long.

When spring rolled around again, the congregation purchased a residence property just across the street from their church building, and the old manse — scene of so many happy gatherings of the Estes family — was sold. The "new" manse was not new at all, but in much better repair than the former one. A large house, it offered Preacher and Nannie more room than ever in which to live and be hospitable. So the Preacher and Nannie were overjoyed with this move.

There were many grand and joyous occasions during those years, but in 1947 the Preacher's seventy-third birthday coincided with the anniversary of his fifty consecutive years in the Gospel Ministry as a Presbyterian pastor, and this occasion was the greatest!

Probably no celebration — at least in the Estes family — ever quite reached the peaks of that one. All members of the immediate family were present from all sections of Texas. Other relatives and friends from many former pastorates arrived. And various church officials took part in the day's services. Dr. Gerrant, president of Austin College, a Presbyterian US school, located in Sherman, Texas, presided at the morning worship service. Congratulatory messages were received from every field and church formerly served by Preacher in his ministry. It was indeed a great day of thanksgiving for all concerned, all the numbers who make up the Presbyterian Church, everywhere, and all the family in the manse.

In the message that morning, the guest speaker summed up the Preacher's fifty years of service by saying: "Rev. Estes has served churches in Indiana, Illinois, Oklahoma, Missouri

and Texas, with mission points connected with every field. He has aided in erecting and repairing eleven strong church buildings and new or improved homes for the ministers. Before being ordained, Estes witnessed more than 560 souls saved; he welcomed into church membership 2,000 souls; he conducted more than 1,500 funeral services, more than 800 marriage ceremonies, and delivered 5,551 sermons. He aided in special singing evangelistic services and directing choruses in nine different states."

In reviewing his own years of service, Preacher said, "Just a life of 'here a little, and there a little' is the real work of God. Just to know people and to enjoy working and aiding anyone, everyone. Surely this is the work of the Master — going about doing good. Even in this day, the work of the minister is the greatest work in all human life, and I have never doubted my life work."

From Ohio came an evangelist, Rev. Tomshanty, and his wife, in January, 1948, to assist the Preacher in a series of revival meetings at Whitesboro. The entire community took part in the services before the week was over, and it was termed a most successful series. Attending during the last week of the services were Mr. and Mrs. John Prather of Ashmore, Illinois, old and dear friends of the Estes family, and former neighbors.

Naturally, the Prathers were made at home in the manse, and since this was their first visit to Texas, their host and hostess tried to show them as much of the Lone Star State as possible. They visited the daughter's home in Olney, where they enjoyed the acres and acres of wheatfields, the stock grazing and the oil wells pumping. Highlight of the visit was a day spent in Fort Worth attending the Southwestern Exhibition and Fat Stock Show. Mr. Prather, a retired Illinois farmer, was almost ready to move to Texas after one week of sight-seeing.

This visit of dear friends seemed to be a special one for all concerned, and when the time for good-bys came, all were a little saddened.

Severe winter weather marked that January and Feb-

ruary. Such an abundance of activities, and the routine of necessary duties, seemed almost at times to be too much for the Preacher. Most of the time he had young ministerial students to assist him in his pastoring. These young men, and sometimes their wives, stayed in the manse and enjoyed the use of Preacher's library and study.

Funerals in the snow; sermons when he was too tired; firm handshakes and broad smiles to cover pain — all soon began to make a difference in Preacher's generally happy, optimistic and vivacious personality. He was ill, and hardly anyone believed it.

Three different visits in the Denton Hospital, where he stayed six weeks in all, did not seem to improve his condition. And on June 1, 1948, he underwent major surgery. For about a week he seemed to respond well to treatment, but after that he slowly weakened, regardless of the number of blood transfusions, and all the wonderful care he received from many doctors and nurses.

On June 14, he quietly fell asleep, to awaken in that Home Above, not a manse, but a mansion.

Once again, all the children were home; relatives and friends from all over the Southwest were in attendance to pay homage at the funeral service of this most wonderful Preacher, this good man. Memorial gifts were made to orphanages, medical foundations and churches, and floral gifts in the hundreds were sent to hospitals, churches, and to the manse itself.

His last service, one in memory, was held in his own church, the sanctuary he loved and where he served. Interment was in the beautiful cemetery at Denton, for this choice had been made some years previous.

> "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:
>
> "Henceforth, there is laid up for me, a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
>
> II Timothy, 4:7 & 8

CHAPTER 17

Days of Readjustments

SOON AFTER THE FUNERAL SERVICE, the members of the session of the Whitesboro church invited, or rather insisted, that Mrs. Estes remain in the manse for the summer months, at least until a regular pastor could be secured.

There for a few days were some of the children and grandchildren. Then, one by one, they all had to return to their own homes and jobs. Making their home at the manse that summer were a young couple, Rev. and Mrs. Mitchell, who were commuting to Sherman to attend Austin College. Mitchell assisted the Preacher in all of his regular duties. All the Preacher's family fondly knew them as "Jim and Jean," and deeply appreciated Jim's being on hand whenever Preacher had had need of him during these past four months. The Jim Mitchells remained at the manse with "Mrs. Preacher" until the first semester of summer school closed at Austin College.

In July, Lillian, the nurse, went to Saltillo, Mexico, to serve as school nurse for the Texas State College for Women's summer Spanish school. Upon her return to Denton the last of August, she and her mother rented an apartment in Denton. Some of the extra household goods were sold or given away or otherwise divided among the children, and the other possessions were packed for moving. And Preach-

er's widow left the manse on September 8, 1948, to make her home in Denton.

The children were very thoughtful of their mother and wanted the coming months to be as pleasant as could be. It was arranged that "Mom," as she was so often called nowadays, visit in Conroe at the McCulloughs' through Thanksgiving. Then she would go on to New Orleans to spend two weeks with Lola May and Ted Rozsa. And by mid-December she would travel up to Ruston, Louisiana, the home of Ruth and Tom, where the family would spend Christmas together.

Mom and all the children were striving to make Christmas seem as much like "old times" as possible; yet, it was a time of silent remembering. Each member of the family, young and old, missed the hearty laugh and the poised assurance of the Preacher. But each was trying to comfort the others, so that the children, the little ones, at least, could have a "Merry Christmas."

Lillian was not present at that Christmas gathering, for she had remained on duty at the hospital. But long-distance telephone brought them all together that Christmas morning. After an extended week end in Ruston, the several families returned to their respective homes in Texas and arrived safely before the stormy January weather began.

In April the Ted Rozsas and children were transferred from New Orleans, to Calgary, Alberta, Canada, so "Mom" went to New Orleans to help with the packing. She accompanied them as far as Denton, where she told them farewell, and they headed for the North.

Later in the spring, she began her round of family visits again. She shared in the celebration of some of the grandchildren's birthdays. And in August, she took part in Mac's big birthday party at Conroe, where his own mother of Dallas was also present. She arrived back in Denton in September in time to see Lillian off for New York. In the big city, Miss Estes spent two weeks as a representative of the National Foundation for Poliomyelitis. She had served as local chairman of the Denton County Chapter and helped direct the

"March of Dimes." She was a dedicated worker in this cause and had a wonderful trip seeing the famous spots and appearing on radio and television promotions for the Polio Fund Drives.

Another move took place that fall, and Lillian and "Mom" exchanged their duplex dwelling for a five-room house, new and clean, in the western part of Denton.

In Canada, the weather was changing, and one knew that winter was just ahead. Lola May, homesick and homebound with her small children, invited "Mom" to spend the winter months with them in Calgary. The decision was made, and she planned her trip North. She arrived in Calgary in time to help Lola May and Ted and their many friends from the United States prepare for a joyous Thanksgiving dinner and celebration. Then followed a big Christmas "Holiday," Nannie's first away from home.

Some of the other children did enjoy Christmas together that year, but all the family, children and grandchildren, felt the separation and knew that the Christmases past — always spent in the manse — were happy memories.

They also recognized that the manners and customs they had all learned in the manse, were simply happy preparation for the days ahead.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
B.E795E C001
MANNERS OF THE MANSE SAN ANTONIO
3 0112 025405926